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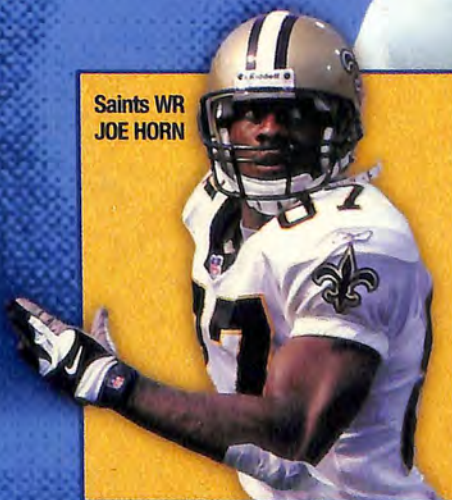
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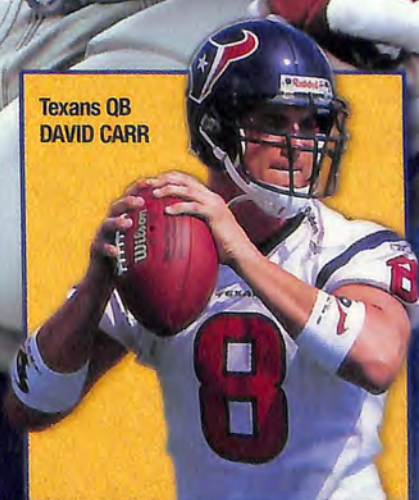


Cowboys RB EMMITT SMITH
makes his run at history

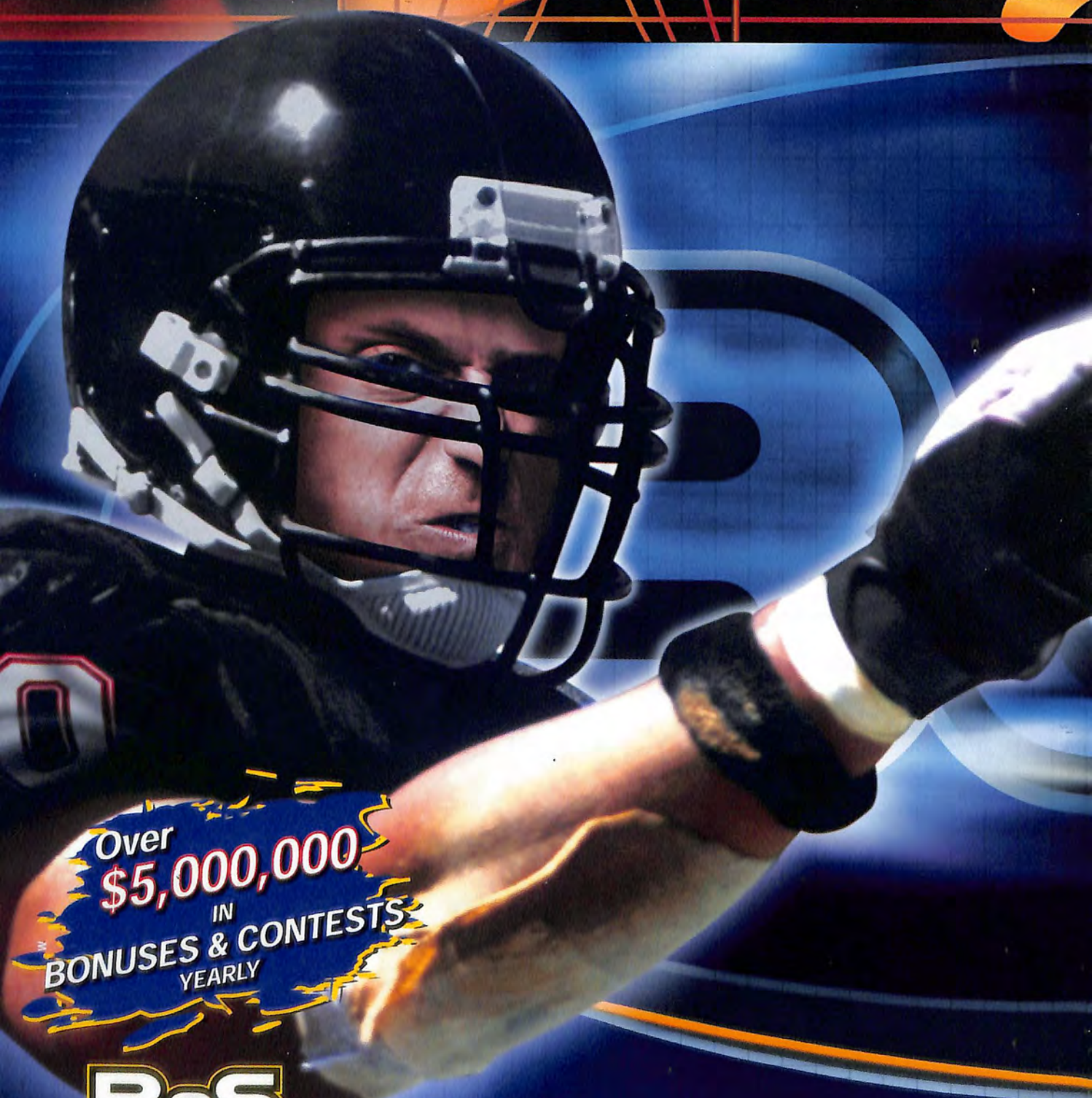
Saints WR
JOE HORN



Texans QB
DAVID CARR



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Unfinished

TSN BY DAN POMPEI
Predictions

The Rams were the best team in the NFL for most of last season. This year, they are the best team on paper and will close the deal with a Super Bowl victory.

Business

They have the most dominant quarterback.
The most dangerous running back.
The premier offensive mind.
The best set of receivers.

The defense that ranked third in yards allowed.

The kicker who led the league in scoring last year and didn't miss a single kick the previous year.

It almost isn't fair. The St. Louis Rams have been to the Super Bowl two of the last three seasons and are without a doubt the NFL's best team on paper, as well as artificial turf. If the best team wins, the Super Bowl parade does a loop around the Arch.

Of course, the best team on preseason paper rarely wins the Super Bowl. Little things like injuries, slumps and games tend to get in the way. But the Rams have been a consistently dominant team over the past three years, and there is no reason that should change.

This season, they should be motivated like never before, because their second set of Super Bowl rings almost was over their knuckles when the Patriots pulled them off. Cold-blooded precision has been responsible for 37 regular-season victories by the Rams in three seasons. If they can play with anger as well as precision this year, they can be more dangerous than ever.

Improvement is not an unattainable goal for the team that one season ago won more games than any other. Remember, last year was the Rams' first after a defensive makeover. This year, defensive coordinator Lovie Smith's garden should be in full bloom.

St. Louis has a lot of young, improving players, particularly on defense. Look for the four players chosen in the top two rounds of the 2001 draft—defensive linemen Damione Lewis and Ryan Pickett, safety Adam Archuleta and linebacker Tommy Polley—to show growth this year.

The Rams will need more plays from their youngsters to compensate for the loss of middle linebacker London Fletcher, who led the team in tackles, energy and zeal the last three seasons and had been regarded as the team's most valuable defensive player.

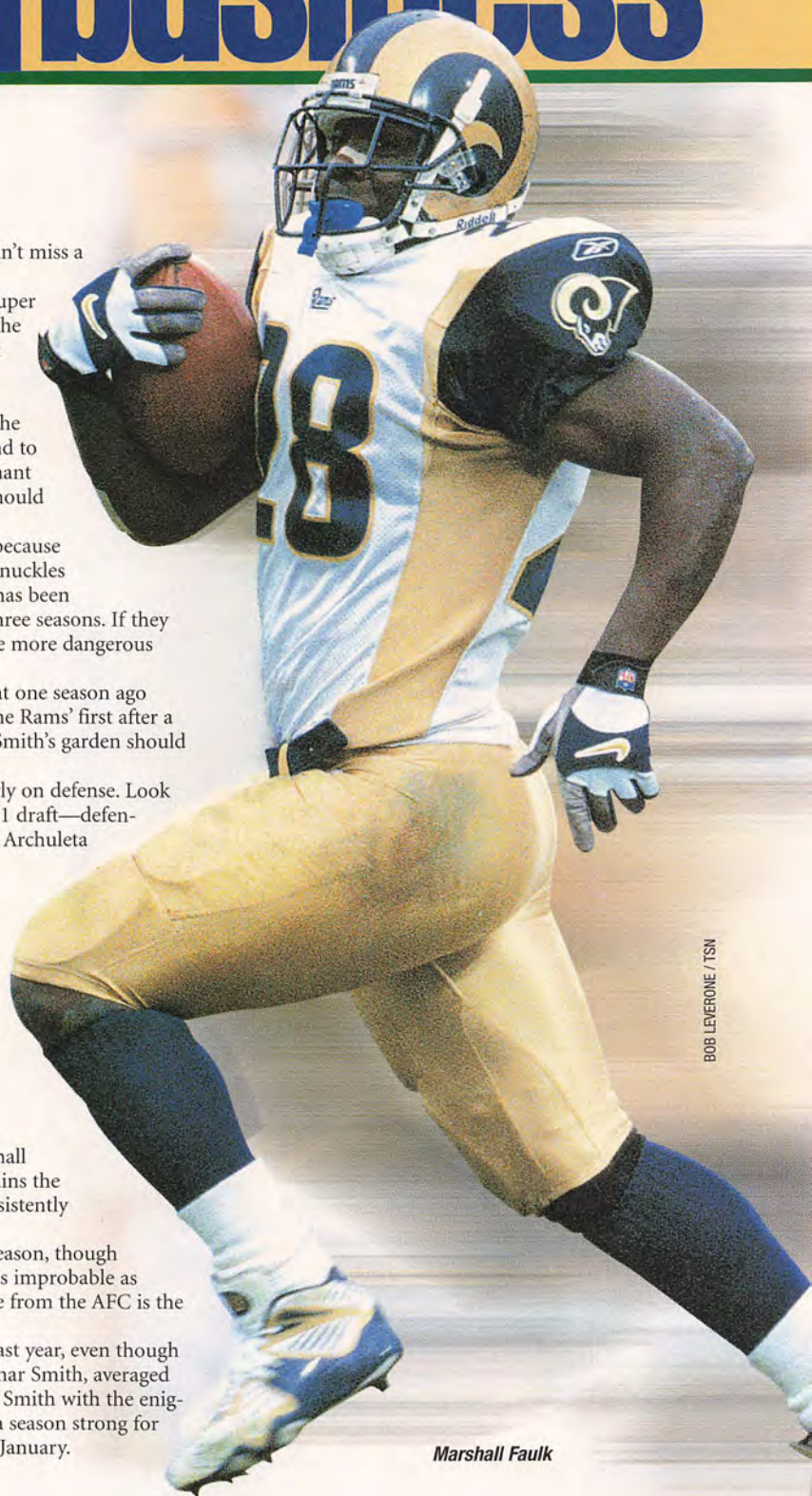
They will miss Fletcher, but not as much as they will miss the Panthers and Falcons, who had been victimized by the Rams 10 times in the last three years. In the reconfigured NFC West (Arizona, San Francisco, St. Louis and Seattle), the Rams won't have as many two-inch putts.

None of that is enough to douse the sparks that fly when coach Mike Martz designs plays, Kurt Warner throws, Marshall Faulk runs and Isaac Bruce catches. The Rams' offense remains the NFL's most awesome machine, one defenses have yet to consistently counter.

There will be other Patriots lurking in the shadows this season, though it's difficult to imagine any team putting together a season as improbable as New England's 2001 campaign. One team that could emerge from the AFC is the Dolphins.

They won as many regular-season games as the Patriots last year, even though the player Miami built its offense around, running back Lamar Smith, averaged 3.1 yards per carry. This season, the Dolphins have replaced Smith with the enigmatic but gifted Ricky Williams, and if Williams can finish a season strong for the first time in his career, the Dolphins will be laughing in January.

Until, that is, their date with the Rams.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Marshall Faulk

Picking through the AFC

EAST

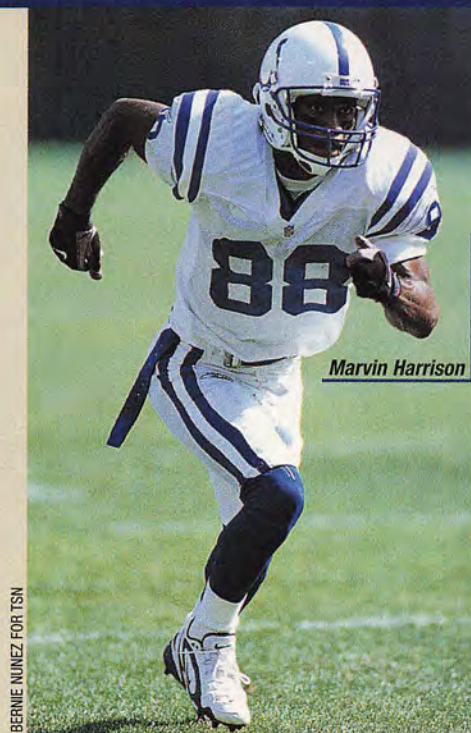
The Patriots were the surprise team in the NFL a year ago, but it will difficult for a surprise team to sustain its surge through another season—especially in this tough division. If the team with the best running game and defense is going to prevail in the AFC East, then the Dolphins have a heck of a chance. They have more outstanding players than any team in the division. Drew Bledsoe was a nice pickup for the Bills, but he won't swing the balance of power in the division.

1. **Miami.** The Dolphins won 11 games last year, and that was without Ricky Williams. If he stays healthy, Williams will make Jay Fiedler a better quarterback.
2. **New England.** It would be unrealistic to expect the Patriots to play to the level they played at last year. But New England still will be a respectable opponent that plays almost every team tough.
3. **New York Jets.** Lots of changes on defense should mean the Jets allow fewer rushing yards. But they also will need more juice on offense if they are going to break through to the next level.
4. **Buffalo.** The Bills had a nice offseason and will be an improved team, no question. But they aren't ripe yet. Wait until next year.

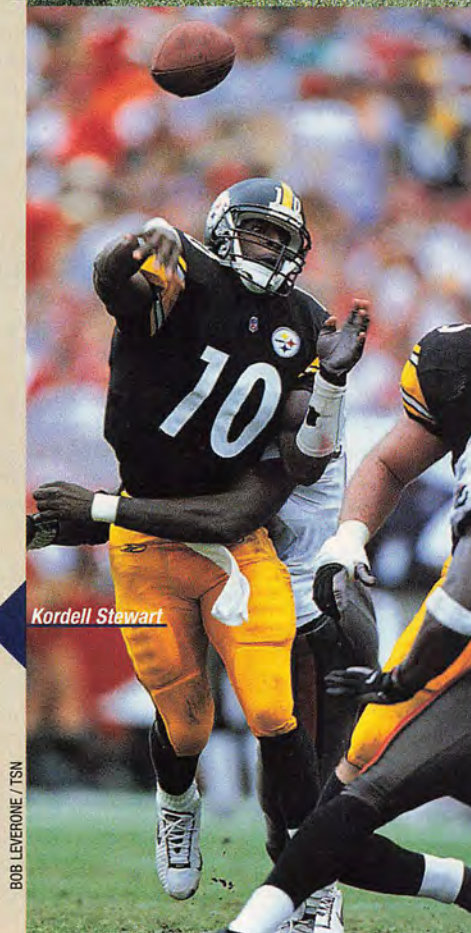
NORTH

This will be the beginning of a new era for the division formerly known as the AFC Central. Recent powerhouses Baltimore, Tennessee and Jacksonville no longer are factors, with the Ravens decimated by the salary cap and both the Titans and the Jaguars shifted to the AFC South. The new sheriff in town very well may be Tim Couch and his Browns. One thing is sure to remain the same in the division: the Steelers will be there in January.

1. **Cleveland.** All of those high draft picks from the Browns' first three years are starting to mature into quality players, and Butch Davis' system is taking hold.
2. **Pittsburgh.** Can Kordell Stewart put two great seasons together? If he can, the Steelers will be a Super Bowl contender, because the defense and running game are tops.
3. **Cincinnati.** The team isn't as bad as its reputation, but unless the Bengals solve their quarterback problem, they are going to be also-rans. Again.
4. **Baltimore.** The Ravens lost way too much talent to be competitive. If this team wins eight games, Brian Billick should be coach of the year.



Marvin Harrison



Kordell Stewart

SOUTH

This would have been a heck of a division three years ago, when the Titans, Jaguars and Colts were a combined 40-8. But all three teams have slipped since then. The Colts are in the best position to rebound, with three of the NFL's best offensive players: Peyton Manning, Edgerrin James and Marvin Harrison. The top three teams in this division likely will improve their records by beating up on the new kids on the block, the expansion Texans.

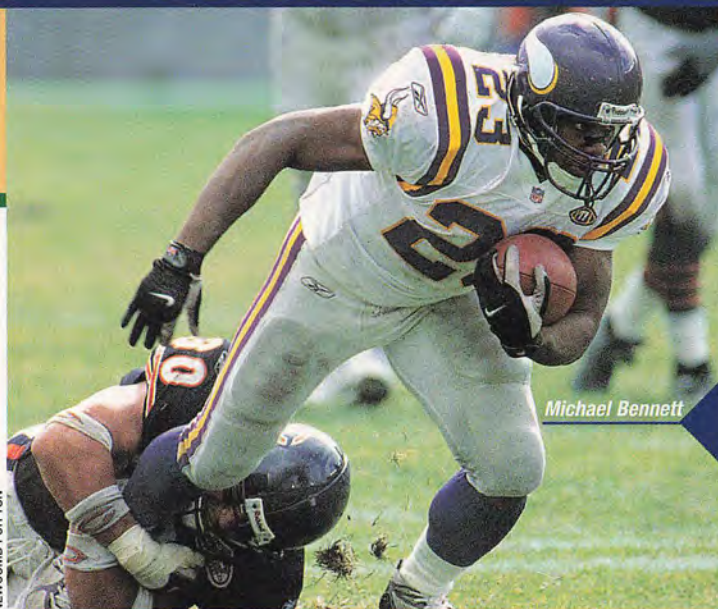
1. **Indianapolis.** A new division could mean new life for Manning and the Colts. The defense should get a boost with Tony Dungy running the show.
2. **Tennessee.** The Titans have taken some hits but have done a nice job of replenishing the players they have lost. If Eddie George is healthy and some of the young players come through, they'll contend.
3. **Jacksonville.** The Jaguars are trying to rebuild on the fly, and that rarely works. They'll feel the affects of losing so many quality players.
4. **Houston.** There is some talent here, but there is no such thing as an instant playoff contender. Give the Texans a couple of years.

WEST

As usual, the AFC West is full of familiar faces in new places. Among them are coach Marty Schottenheimer and linebacker Donnie Edwards in San Diego and defensive tackle John Parrella and linebacker Bill Romanowski in Oakland. What remains the same is that the division will be tightly contested and probably up for grabs until the final week of the regular season. There is no clear favorite.

1. **Kansas City.** Look no further for a surprise team. The Chiefs won three of their last four games, and they could continue the roll this season with an improved receiving unit and a defense that is more stout.
2. **Oakland.** This is a talented but aging team. If the Raiders can stay healthy, they will be tough to beat. The absence of Jon Gruden will be felt, however.
3. **Denver.** Ed McCaffrey, Shannon Sharpe, Rob Moore, Ashley Lelie and Clinton Portis should help Brian Griese return to form. You never can discount the Broncos.
4. **San Diego.** The Chargers are on the rise, no doubt. Their defense should be outstanding, but their offense is an unknown with the quarterback position unsettled.

Picking through the **NFC**



Michael Bennett

EAST

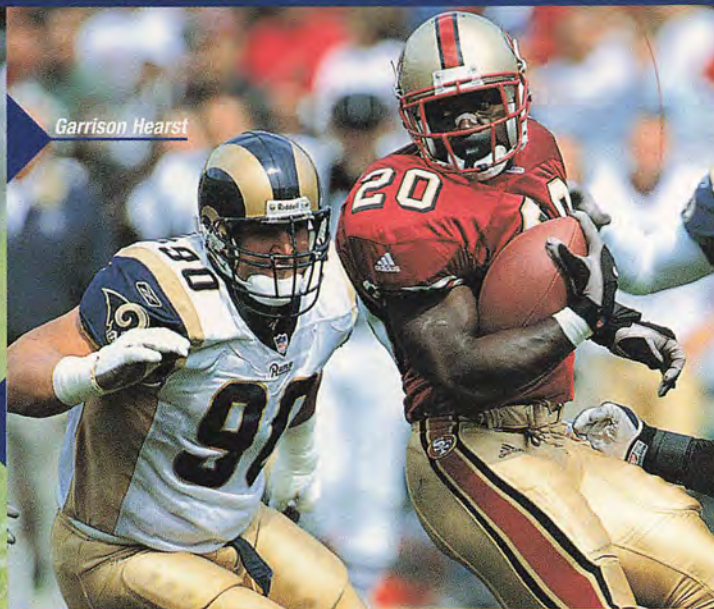
The one team that can be counted on in this division is the Eagles. Just about everybody agrees they should be a contender. Beyond that, the NFC East is a crapshoot. The wild card is the Redskins, with new coach Steve Spurrier capable of making a major impact. The sleeper is the Cowboys, who are past their salary-cap issues and made significant additions in free agency.

1. **Dallas.** A soft schedule and an improving defense could make the Cowboys a surprise team. The key is if quarterback Quincy Carter can continue to develop.
2. **Philadelphia.** The losses of Jeremiah Trotter (who signed with Washington) and Correll Buckhalter (injured knee) could affect the Eagles. But this remains a solid team throughout, and we have yet to see the best of quarterback Donovan McNabb.
3. **Washington.** The defense looks like a good one, though it is overrated in some quarters. So the key question: To what degree can Spurrier get the offense to overachieve?
4. **New York Giants.** Because of salary-cap issues, the Giants had to take a step back this off-season. With a questionable offensive line and quarterback Kerry Collins coming off a mediocre year, their offense might not be good enough.

NORTH

This division again should come down to the Packers and Bears—Brett Favre's arm against the Bears' bold defense. Bears backup quarterback Chris Chandler, a free-agent pickup, also could have a say in how the NFC North shakes out. The Vikings should be interesting with new coach Mike Tice vowing to get the ball to Randy Moss more and Moss having recommitted himself to the team.

1. **Green Bay.** If Favre's receivers play to their potential, this could be a Super Bowl team. Even if they don't, the Packers are a dangerous opponent that can beat teams a lot of ways.
2. **Chicago.** Playing home games in Champaign, Ill., probably will have a negative effect on the Bears, who are bound to come back to earth after a 13-win season a year ago.
3. **Minnesota.** The Vikings should score a lot of points, especially if running back Michael Bennett comes on. The problem is they should give up a lot of points, too.
4. **Detroit.** Unless Joey Harrington or Mike McMahon can take over and play like a Pro Bowl quarterback, it will be another long season in Motown. The dearth of play-makers remains.



Garrison Hearst

SOUTH

Keep an eye on young players in this division. Quarterback Michael Vick of the Falcons, running back Deuce McAllister of the Saints and quarterback Chris Weinke of the Panthers will have a lot to say about the final standings. It will be interesting to see what kind of impact Warrick Dunn's jump to the Falcons from the Bucs will have. New coaches Jon Gruden of the Bucs and John Fox of the Panthers should provide some fire.

1. **Tampa Bay.** Getting away from the teams in the NFC North was the best thing for the Bucs. Their defense remains excellent, and if Gruden can get the offense moving, this team finally might break through.
2. **Atlanta.** Even if Vick is erratic, he should help the Falcons win some games. Atlanta's new 3-4 defense could help the team get advantageous matchups.
3. **New Orleans.** This team made wholesale changes, so the Saints have to be considered an unknown. The running game and the pass rush might suffer, but the team speed and run defense should be improved.
4. **Carolina.** Where will the big plays come from? For the Panthers to make a move, they need rookies Julius Peppers and DeShaun Foster to have big years.

WEST

This is the division of big plays, with some of the league's most spectacular offensive players in Kurt Warner, Marshall Faulk, Isaac Bruce, Jeff Garcia, Terrell Owens, Garrison Hearst and David Boston. Coaches Mike Martz, Mike Holmgren and Steve Mariucci also are three of the league's premier offensive minds. It doesn't look like any team can dethrone the Rams.

1. **St. Louis.** The most talented team last year is the most talented team this year. The defense will miss middle line-backer London Fletcher but not too much.
2. **San Francisco.** If the young defense can continue to make strides, the 49ers will find ways to win a lot of games. Jeff Garcia is one of the league's most resourceful quarterbacks.
3. **Seattle.** Coming over from the AFC West, the Seahawks will have to adjust to a new style of football. Will their defense be up to the task? Let's see what Trent Dilfer can do for an entire season.
4. **Arizona.** This team will remain competitive with coach Dave McGinnis in charge. However, the Cardinals still have a lot of holes on defense. Can Thomas Jones be the man at running back?

The Playoff Teams

NFC: Rams, 49ers, Bucs, Packers, Cowboys, Eagles

AFC: Dolphins, Browns, Steelers, Colts, Chiefs, Raiders

The Conference Champions

Rams over Buccaneers
Dolphins over Chiefs

The Super Bowl

Rams over Dolphins

The last time these teams met, it was ugly. The Rams romped 42-10 in St. Louis last September. The feeling at the time was that the Dolphins' defense, though talented and effective, did not match up well against the Rams' offense.

And the truth is, no defense matches up well with the Rams' offense. But the Dolphins do have one thing in their favor—a pair of corners (Sam Madison and Patrick Surtain) who cover man-to-man as well as any in the NFL. If they can lock onto Rams receivers Isaac Bruce and Torry Holt, the Dolphins will have a chance. The one player the Dolphins might not have an answer for is Marshall Faulk. With Faulk's speed and quick cutting ability, the only one who can take him out of a game is Mike Martz.

NFL Award Winners

Player of the year: Donovan McNabb, Eagles. He just keeps getting better, and this could be his breakout season with his receivers starting to mature. The Eagles might ask more of him this year after losing Correll Buckhalter for the season.

Rookie of the year: Clinton Portis, Broncos. Running backs usually show they belong pretty quickly, and Portis belongs. What's more, he's in the perfect system for his abilities. All he needs is an opportunity.

Coach of the year: Dave Campo, Cowboys. If he can turn around the Cowboys with their collection of quarterbacks, he'll deserve this award.

Comeback player of the year: Drew Bledsoe, Bills. Three other strong candidates for this award are Colts running back Edgerrin James, Redskins wide receiver Jacques Green and Cowboys cornerback Bryant Westbrook.

Super Bowl MVP: Kurt Warner, Rams. Think he has a little motivation this year? If he wins it, it will be his second.

Going deep

Best AFC coach: Bill Belichick, Patriots

Best NFC coach: Jon Gruden, Bucs

Best coaching staff: Rams

Coach on the hottest seat:

Dan Reeves, Falcons

Best front office: Bills

Best home-field advantage: Packers

Worst home-field advantage: Bears

Most overrated player:

Drew Bledsoe, Bills

Most underrated player:

Chris Chandler, Bears

Strongest arm: Brett Favre, Packers

Best at audibles:

Peyton Manning, Colts

Most fearless quarterback:

Jeff Garcia, 49ers

Most dangerous scrambler:

Donovan McNabb, Eagles

Quickest offensive lineman:

Kevin Mawae, Jets

Most powerful offensive lineman:

Leonard Davis, Cardinals

Best blocking tight end:

Mark Bruener, Steelers

Fastest running back:

Ahman Green, Packers

Shiftest running back:

Marshall Faulk, Rams

Best short-yardage runner:

Corey Dillon, Bengals

Best blocking back:

James Hodgins, Rams

Most physical receiver:

David Boston, Cardinals

Most fearless receiver:

Hines Ward, Steelers

Surest hands: Troy Brown, Patriots

Best route runner:

Marvin Harrison, Colts

Fastest receiver:

Randy Moss, Vikings

Fastest defensive back:

Champ Bailey, Redskins

Best run-support cornerback:

Antoine Winfield, Bills

Hardest-hitting safety:

Rodney Harrison, Chargers

Best diagnostic safety:

Sammy Knight, Saints

Hardest-hitting linebacker:

Kendrell Bell, Steelers

Best blitz:

Charlie Clemons, Saints

Best cover linebacker:

Derrick Brooks, Bucs

Most disruptive end:

Jevon Kearse, Titans

Best pass-rush specialist:

Leonard Little, Rams

Best end against the run:

Michael Strahan, Giants

Best run-stuffing tackle:

Ted Washington, Bears

Best special teams kamikaze:

Tebucky Jones, Patriots

Best free-agent acquisition

(offense): Johnnie Morton, Chiefs

Best free-agent acquisition

(defense): Donnie Edwards, Chargers

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The High End

Ranking the best of the best, position by position

BY THE WAR ROOM

There's no substituting for quality—especially in the fluid world of the NFL. If you don't keep a steady flow of well-tuned, dynamic players coming in and maintain engineer-like efficiency on the coaching side, you'll be driving a clunker in no time. Maintain quality up and down your roster, and you'll run smoothly.

If preserving quality is the goal, then rating the best is the premium.

Quarterbacks

STARTERS

1. **Kurt Warner, Rams.** His rapid release, field vision, poise, instincts and arm strength are five reasons the Rams have become a perennial powerhouse.
2. **Brett Favre, Packers.** This leader has learned to cut down on mistakes while still generating plenty of fireworks—all while making those around him better.
3. **Jeff Garcia, 49ers.** His skills under pressure, quick thinking and precision passing have made him the model of a West Coast quarterback.

BACKUPS

1. **Chris Chandler, Bears.** He has accumulated some serious mileage as a starter and has a history of injuries, but he'll add great depth as the No. 2 man in Chicago. His presence could lead to a quick hook for starter Jim Miller.
2. **Rob Johnson, Buccaneers.** Quick feet and a strong arm are his best attributes. Playing behind a patchwork line in Buffalo, Johnson wasn't able to fully show his skills. New Bucs coach Jon Gruden likes him.
3. **Steve Beuerlein, Broncos.** No backup has more big-game experience and can manage an offense like this wily veteran. But can he stay healthy?
4. **Doug Flutie or Drew Brees, Chargers.** Regardless of who starts, the Chargers will have an excellent insurance policy with either player holding the clipboard.

NEXT GENERATION

1. **Tom Brady, Patriots.** His instincts, know-how and penchant for winning have put him on the NFL map. He is poised beyond his years.
2. **David Carr, Texans.** The table is set for him to flourish in an offense that is being built around him. He'll be coached by coordinator Chris Palmer, who has been through this process before with Tim Couch and the expansion Browns.
3. **Michael Vick, Falcons.** He has the feet, release and arm to become the type of quarterback who can carry a team on his shoulders.
4. **Chad Pennington, Jets.** He's being groomed as the team's quarterback of the future. Once he learns how to take advantage of his instincts and physical skills, he'll do fine in coordinator Paul Hackett's West Coast offense.

Running backs

BETWEEN-THE-TACKLES BACKS

1. **Curtis Martin, Jets.** One of the league's most durable backs, he uses great leverage, burst, power and body lean to churn out yards inside.
2. **Ricky Williams, Dolphins.** His ability to bounce off tacklers and gain yards makes him a great inside runner. Miami will build its offense around him.
3. **Priest Holmes, Chiefs.** The NFL's leading rusher last season, Holmes sees the hole and has a great burst, making him a menace for the interior of defenses.

OUTSIDE/SPEED BACKS

1. **Marshall Faulk, Rams.** No player in the league causes more matchup problems.
2. **Edgerrin James, Colts.** He gets a lot of credit for his ability to break tackles, but his breakaway speed and second gear turn 5-yard runs into 20- and 30-yard jaunts.
3. **Ahman Green, Packers.** This slashing back moves well laterally and has even better straight-line speed, which he uses to generate big plays.

THIRD-DOWN BACKS

1. **Charlie Garner, Raiders.** His running ability keeps opponents honest, and his hands and feel as a receiver give the Raiders another weapon in the passing game.
2. **Tiki Barber, Giants.** He's the heart of the Giants' offense. His relationship with quarterback Kerry Collins has resulted in an average of 69 receptions over the last three seasons.
3. **Warrick Dunn, Falcons.** His speed and quickness present matchup trouble for any line-backer. He'll be a huge weapon for Atlanta.

Fullbacks RUNNERS

1. **Mike Alstott, Buccaneers.** He bounces off tacklers and can make them miss in space, a rarity for a fullback.
2. **Tony Richardson, Chiefs.** His skills as a runner were so effective that he earned a lot of time at halfback before the Chiefs signed Priest Holmes in 2001.
3. **Fred Beasley, 49ers.** His role as a runner has been limited to short-yardage situations because Garrison Hearst and Kevan Barlow do most of the work between the 20s. But Beasley's bruising style almost always nets key yards.

BLOCKERS

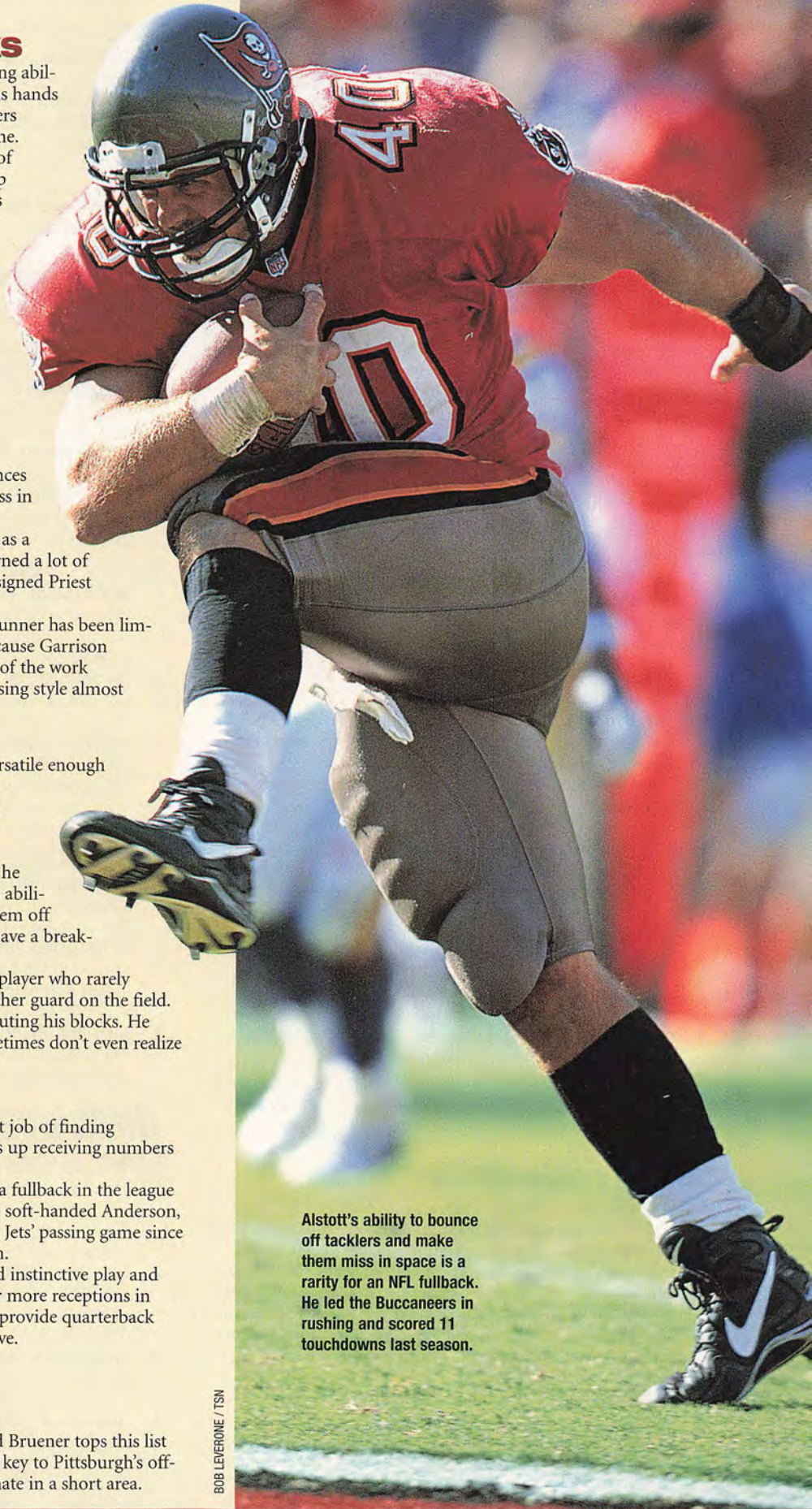
1. **Lorenzo Neal, Bengals.** He's not versatile enough for some complex schemes, but wherever Neal has played, running backs almost always have thrived behind his physical blocking.
2. **Fred McCrary, Chargers.** Although he received little credit last season, his ability to get to his blocks and finish them off enabled LaDainian Tomlinson to have a breakout rookie season.
3. **Cecil Martin, Eagles.** A blue-collar player who rarely touches the ball, Martin is like another guard on the field. He takes all the right angles in executing his blocks. He does his job so efficiently, you sometimes don't even realize he's on the field.

RECEIVERS

1. **Larry Centers, Bills.** He does a great job of finding openings in the defense, so he racks up receiving numbers and his quarterbacks escape sacks.
2. **Richie Anderson, Jets.** There's not a fullback in the league who runs sharper patterns than the soft-handed Anderson, who has been a real presence in the Jets' passing game since the departure of Keyshawn Johnson.
3. **Bob Christian, Falcons.** He has used instinctive play and solid route running to pile up 40 or more receptions in each of the last three seasons. He'll provide quarterback Michael Vick with a solid safety valve.

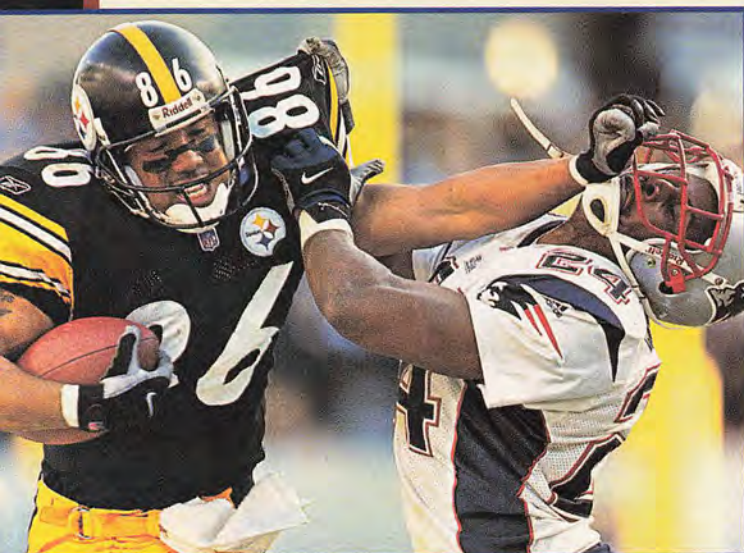
Tight ends BLOCKERS

1. **Mark Bruener, Steelers.** The rugged Bruener tops this list for the third straight year. He is the key to Pittsburgh's off-tackle ground game and can dominate in a short area.



Alstott's ability to bounce off tacklers and make them miss in space is a rarity for an NFL fullback. He led the Buccaneers in rushing and scored 11 touchdowns last season.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Whether he's fending off a defensive back downfield or cracking back on a linebacker, Ward can deliver some devastating blocks.

2. **Dwayne Carswell, Broncos.** He uses leverage and leg drive to win battles against bigger opponents and angles and quickness to block faster ones.
3. **Ken Dilger, Buccaneers.** He may not be the strongest tight end in the league, but he is an extremely tactical blocker who gets his pads under opponents and shows good range in space.

RECEIVERS

1. **Tony Gonzalez, Chiefs.** With his combination of size and speed, he is a dominant force and unchallenged as the top receiving tight end. He must be accounted for on every play.
2. **Frank Wycheck, Titans.** He has maintained solid receiving numbers the past several seasons even though Tennessee's wide receivers don't command a lot of extra attention.
3. **Byron Chamberlain, Vikings.** When wide receivers Cris Carter and Randy Moss failed to step up with any consistency last season and the running game struggled, Chamberlain piled up a career-high 57 receptions and showed he could stretch secondaries.
4. **Shannon Sharpe, Broncos.** Even at 34, Sharpe still has as much big-play ability as any tight end in the NFL. After two seasons in Baltimore, he will look to rejuvenate his career with his old team.
5. **Marcus Pollard, Colts.** He often gets to match up against the opponent's weakest cover defender, whether it's a safety, cornerback or linebacker, through the Colts' use of motion from their two-tight end sets. Pollard's combination of size and speed make him a nightmare matchup.

Wide receivers

ROUTE RUNNERS

1. **Rod Smith, Broncos.** He gets off the line with great burst, and his strength enables him to beat press coverage. He makes quick, precise cuts and gets in and out of his breaks as well as any receiver.
2. **Jimmy Smith, Jaguars.** He still has impressive speed and does a terrific job of setting up cornerbacks. Smith's double moves often leave defenders watching him celebrate another long reception or touchdown.
3. **Marvin Harrison, Colts.** Many scouts and coaches unfairly labeled Harrison as a "track-star" type of receiver coming out of Syracuse. Since entering the league in 1996, Harrison has put such talk to rest by showing great ability to change directions in the open field and knowing where the first-down marker is on third down.

DEEP SPEED

1. **David Boston, Cardinals.** He may be built like the Incredible Hulk, but he runs like an undersized wideout, enabling him to stretch defenses and make big plays downfield.
2. **Isaac Bruce, Rams.** In the Rams' offense, which is predicated on a lot of crossing routes and yards after the catch, Bruce uses raw speed and exceptional quickness on cuts to open up the underneath areas for Kurt Warner and Co.
3. **Randy Moss, Vikings.** He's the best athlete at the position. He does a terrific job of using long strides to deceive opponents, then blazes past them.

POSSESSION

1. **Keyshawn Johnson, Buccaneers.** Tampa Bay's short passing game was ridiculously predictable last season, but Johnson never stopped going over the middle and catching passes in crowds of defenders.
2. **Marty Booker, Bears.** He has great strength, but it is his ability to catch the ball away from his body that enables him to be such a threat to move the chains.
3. **Tim Brown and Jerry Rice, Raiders (tie).** Once considered two of the league's best vertical receivers, they have tailored their games to fit the Raiders' offense while compensating for their ages. Both players know how to get underneath coverage and find soft spots while on the move.

AFTER THE CATCH

1. **Terrell Owens, 49ers.** Ever since he added muscle to his big frame, Owens has been a terror gaining yards after the catch. He's like a tight end with unheard-of speed and is a nightmare to bring down in the open field.
2. **Joe Horn, Saints.** He doesn't break stride while catching the ball, makes defenders miss in the open field and has the power to run through tacklers.
3. **Laveranues Coles, Jets.** He has impeccable body control, and his productivity after the catch is more along the lines of what people thought Peter Warrick, his Florida State teammate who was selected 74 picks ahead of Coles in the 2000 draft, would be.

BLOCKERS

1. **Hines Ward, Steelers.** Whether it was blocking downfield after a reception or cracking back on a linebacker on a sweep, he showed last season that he has become an elite blocking receiver.
2. **Ed McCaffrey, Broncos.** He does a good job of using his long arms to move defenders. McCaffrey's blocking ability has helped Rod Smith and Shannon Sharpe pick up a lot of yards after the catch over the years.
3. **Torry Holt, Rams.** He always is looking for something to do. The fact that he finishes off every route he runs puts him in great position to make blocks downfield.

Offensive tackles

LEFT SIDE

1. **Jonathan Ogden, Ravens.** Most big tackles have trouble redirecting their bodies in pass protection, but Ogden shifts his weight as well as the smallest of linemen. He engulfs smaller ends and uses his feet to slide with quicker ones.
2. **Tarik Glenn, Colts.** He has great knee bend for a bigger tackle, and his ability to mirror and slide is rare. Glenn shows a natural setup ability and has the long arms to force ends wide in their pass rush.
3. **Orlando Pace, Rams.** This shutdown tackle erases his opponent on game day. Extremely athletic for his size, Pace dominates in both the running game and passing game.
4. **Tony Boselli, Texans.** While injuries have taken a toll on him, Boselli still is an elite player whenever he puts on the uniform. He can slide with undersized speed rushers as well as any of the aforementioned players, and he can anchor and contain bull rushers.

5. **Walter Jones, Seahawks.** He's the best natural athlete at the position. He has struggled to master the fundamentals of the game but is getting better, and his natural skills usually make up for what he lacks in technique.

RIGHT SIDE

1. **Willie Anderson, Bengals.** He is one great reason Corey Dillon finishes among the top rushers each season. Anderson rarely loses in a short area and finishes all his blocks.
2. **Lincoln Kennedy, Raiders.** One of the league's most underrated linemen, he engulfs defenders in the running game and does a terrific job of taking angles to his blocks when he has to move around. Once Kennedy locks onto a target, he rarely loses.
3. **Jon Jansen, Redskins.** He is extremely strong, but his tactical blocking is what makes him so good. He has developed quickly in his short career, thanks in large part to his fundamentals.
4. **Marvel Smith, Steelers.** In his second NFL season, he paved the way for big seasons from running back Jerome Bettis and quarterback Kordell Stewart. Smith's combination of strength and quickness has made him a young player to watch.
5. **Solomon Page, Cowboys.** He has the strength and quickness off the snap to handle faster left ends and overpower bigger ones. Page does a great job of using leverage and angles to efficiently execute all his blocks.



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

Washington, a mammoth, two-gap tackle, not only makes plays but also keeps blockers off middle linebacker Brian Urlacher.

Guards

1. **Ron Stone, 49ers.** He is the best run blocker in the NFL, and his range and feet enable him to block down the field and set up quickly in pass protection. Stone is a perfect fit in the 49ers' West Coast offense.
2. **Larry Allen, Cowboys.** Dallas re-signed Allen to a long-term deal in the offseason, an indication he still has a lot of football left. Last season, he continued to play with a mean streak and execute all his blocking assignments.
3. **Will Shields, Chiefs.** He has great footwork and can overpower opponents in a short area. Shields is an incredibly instinctive lineman who rarely misses an assignment or takes a play off.
4. **Alan Faneca, Steelers.** He has the ability to overpower smaller linemen and uses leverage and tactics to succeed against the bigger guys.
5. **Randy Thomas, Jets.** Thomas is light on his feet for a big man. His adept footwork enables him to make blocks in space and slide against one-gap defensive tackles when pass blocking.

CENTERS

1. **Matt Birk, Vikings.** An unheralded guy out of college, Birk splashed onto the NFL scene in the wake of Jeff Christy's departure to Tampa Bay in 2000. Birk is known for his nasty play, and his Harvard background is evident in his quick thinking and instincts.
2. **Kevin Mawae, Jets.** He is the glue that keeps the Jets' line together and probably is the most powerful center in the league. He also is known for his mean streak on the field and positive work in the locker room.
3. **Olin Kreutz, Bears.** Kreutz has the quickness needed from a center. He is skilled at getting off the ball and getting to his blocks in space.
4. **Jeff Mitchell, Panthers.** He's a well-rounded player who almost never makes a mistake. The consummate anchor, Mitchell does a great job of keeping his line in check with his heady calls, stemming from his ability to quickly identify defensive fronts.
5. **Damien Woody, Patriots.** Although he isn't the most tactical blocker, the powerful Woody has rare burst off the ball for a center and the quickness to stop one-gap defensive tackles.

Defensive ends

1. **Michael Strahan, Giants.** This sack artist has great pass-rushing fundamentals and closes on quarterbacks with special quickness. He also has the strength to stack and shed at the point of attack, and he uses great leverage to stop the run.
2. **Joe Johnson, Packers.** He does a terrific job of sustaining his drive at the point of attack and using his hands to get off blocks. He also comes hard off the corner and does a fine job of taking the shortest route to the quarterback.
3. **Hugh Douglas, Eagles.** Once viewed as a player who focused only on pursuing the quarterback, Douglas now uses leverage and pop upon contact to hold his own against the run. And he remains one of the best pass-rushing ends in the league.
4. **John Abraham, Jets.** After being moved around as a rookie in 2000, he found a home at left end last year. Abraham used cat-like quickness to terrorize quarterbacks en route to a Pro Bowl appearance.
5. **Jevon Kearse, Titans.** The Titans have improved their secondary and should be able to send an extra pass rusher, placing Kearse in single matchups and enabling him to use his speed and quickness to post big sack numbers.

Defensive tackles

1. **Warren Sapp, Tampa Bay.** He's extremely talented and incredibly determined. Sapp's ability to shed blocks and chase plays from the backside makes him equally effective against the run and pass.
2. **Grady Jackson, Saints.** A two-gap tackle who engulfs blockers and ballcarriers, Jackson is not merely a run-stuffer. He comes after the quarterback with a bull rush that often collapses the pocket.
3. **Corey Simon, Eagles.** He's perfect for the Eagles' aggressive scheme, which takes full advantage of Simon's ability to make plays on the move and get upfield. His development has been rapid, and he continues to get better.
4. **Ted Washington, Bears.** He is a mammoth two-gap tackle. Washington's size enables him to make plays and eats up most of Brian Urlacher's potential blockers, allowing the middle linebacker to fly around the field and produce.
5. **Bryant Young, 49ers.** He's athletic, instinctive and powerful. Young's quickness off the snap and ability to see what's happening in front of him enable him to make plays against the run and pass.



Once a player who mainly chased quarterbacks, Chad Brown has become a complete linebacker with pass-coverage skills.

DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

Linebackers

MIDDLE

1. **Ray Lewis, Ravens.** He moves better laterally than most running backs do and still finds a way to play with great power. Lewis might not be quite as productive in the Ravens' new 3-4 scheme, but he still will be the best.
2. **Brian Urlacher, Bears.** He has rare overall athletic ability for a middle linebacker. After a solid rookie performance in 2000, he was a world beater last season. Once he masters the intricacies of the position, he could be one of the best ever.
3. **Jeremiah Trotter, Redskins.** He plays the game with a throwback mentality and chases down ballcarriers sideline to sideline nearly as well as Lewis does.
4. **Zach Thomas, Dolphins.** Though he has suffered some wear and tear over the past few seasons and never will be the player he once was, he is as knowledgeable as they come and has the power to fight through blocks and get to the ballcarrier.
5. **Kendrell Bell, Steelers.** He earned NFL Rookie of the Year honors from *THE SPORTING NEWS* by doing an exceptional job of filling holes and taking on lead blockers in the running game. He defended the pass well and showed the ability to get in and out of his drops smoothly.

WEAK SIDE

1. **Junior Seau, Chargers.** His ability to make plays everywhere is the result of the Chargers allowing him to roam freely, combined with his rare natural skills. He is starting to slip in terms of athletic ability, but he's still the best weakside linebacker.
2. **Peter Boulware, Ravens.** Injuries in the Ravens' defensive line forced him to spend the latter part of last season playing out of

position at end, where he still made an impact. But few players are as skilled as Boulware when it comes to hunkering down and rushing the passer from the weak side.

3. **Joey Porter and Jason Gildon, Steelers (tie).** Gildon is a straight-line, burst guy and comes off the edge like he was shot from a cannon. Porter gets off the ball just as well and is a bit more comfortable getting into position to make tackles in the open field.
4. **Derrick Brooks, Buccaneers.** He covers as well as most cornerbacks, runs like most running backs and brings his hips through every tackle, absolutely punishing the ballcarrier.
5. **Takeo Spikes, Bengals.** The Bengals' struggles have overshadowed the performance of Spikes. He's one of the best run defenders at his position, but he also is capable of covering the faster running backs in the passing game.

STRONG SIDE

1. **LaVar Arrington, Redskins.** He has great ability to get up the field and loves contact. His great feet and overwhelming strength enable him to shed the biggest of blockers and take down ballcarriers of all sizes.
2. **Donnie Edwards, Chargers.** There are few linebackers who can run like Edwards, who can smell out whatever play is coming at him. He is as instinctive as he is athletic.
3. **Jamie Sharper, Texans.** He has improved with each season and proved his worth last year, when he continued to dominate for a Ravens defense that was not as good as it was in 2000. He has the best first step of any run-stuffing linebacker.
4. **Jamir Miller, Browns.** When Butch Davis took over as coach of the Browns, he recognized that Miller is a great upfield player who can blitz, so he devised schemes in which Miller could be dominant. The result: a career-best 13 sacks last season.
5. **Chad Brown, Seahawks.** Once considered an up-the-field linebacker best suited to attack and chase quarterbacks, Brown now is skilled in pass coverage, completing his game.

Safeties

FREE

1. **Brian Dawkins, Eagles.** He's a heady "center fielder" who covers a lot of ground deep. An intimidator, Dawkins has opponents thinking twice before coming over the middle.
2. **Darren Sharper, Packers.** He has been given much more responsibility the last couple of seasons and delivered. Sharper has been used more often as a blitzer, where he has created havoc, but still is as good as any safety patrolling center field.
3. **Mike Brown, Bears.** His preparation and opportunistic play made the Bears a lot better last season. The heady Brown has great anticipation and breaks to the ball with no hesitation.
4. **Lance Schulters, Titans.** A dual-purpose safety who is physical enough to be a force against the run and athletic enough to cover receivers, he should fit perfectly in the Titans' defense.
5. **Kwamie Lassiter, Cardinals.** He may be moving toward the twilight of his career, but his play has not started to decline. Most crafty players lean on their instincts and fundamentals when they begin to age, and that is exactly what Lassiter (32) has started to do.

STRONG

1. **Rodney Harrison, Chargers.** He isn't built like a linebacker, but he hits like one and certainly possesses the nasty mentality of one. Harrison throws his body around against the run and is capable in coverage.
2. **John Lynch, Buccaneers.** He is more of an every-down nickel linebacker than anything else, but he has improved away from the line of scrimmage—in coverage. Lynch remains one of the toughest players in the league and is a force against the run.
3. **Lawyer Milloy, Patriots.** It's time he gets credit for all of his great play over the years. Milloy's versatility and instinctive work against the run and pass make him the perfect fit for the

Patriots' complicated scheme.

4. **Robert Griffith, Browns.** The former Viking does a great job of tackling and never is out of position. He does a fine job of directing traffic in the secondary, something the Browns certainly will appreciate.
5. **Victor Green.** He's a fierce competitor against the run and extremely capable against the pass. For a guy who can come up the field and punish ballcarriers, he's also great at turning and running in coverage.



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

Madison is a physical, press corner whose fluid hips allow him to turn and go downfield with the fastest receivers.

Cornerbacks

1. **Charles Woodson, Raiders.** On a team that uses a lot of press coverage, Woodson has no problem jamming receivers at the line and then turning and running with them down the field. Slowed by nagging injuries last season, Woodson should rebound in '01.
2. **Champ Bailey, Redskins.** He showed great improvement even after a fine rookie season in 2000. Bailey has great ball skills and anticipation. When you match that with his exceptional natural ability, you have a great corner.

3. **Aeneas Williams, Rams.** His work ethic and preparation have made up for what he has lost physically, which isn't much. Williams still gets in and out of breaks extremely well and can make sharp cuts.
4. **Sam Madison, Dolphins.** He loves to mix it up around the line of scrimmage, and his fluid hip turns enable him to get down the field with the fastest of receivers. His interception totals have been down the last two years, but that's because quarterbacks are staying away from him.
5. **Troy Vincent, Eagles.** His age (31) has yet to be reflected in his play. He glides in and out of his pass drops and changes direction with ease for a player of his size (6-1, 200).
6. **Ty Law, Patriots.** He was said to be on the down side of his career heading into last season, but his one-on-one skills were rock solid. He had a big role in New England winning the Super Bowl.
7. **Ronde Barber, Buccaneers.** He covers a lot of ground in Tampa Bay's cover 2 scheme and shows great anticipation in reading the quarterback's eyes and breaking to the ball.
8. **Mike McKenzie, Packers.** He's big, strong and fast. He has the strength and speed to play bump-and-run and the range to be effective in zone coverage.
9. **Ray Buchanan, Falcons.** Despite getting little help from Atlanta's front seven last season, Buchanan still managed to make plays.
10. **Deltha O'Neal, Broncos.** A powerful cover guy with straight-line speed, O'Neal does a good job of hammering guys at the line and getting away with it. He showed rapid development in his second season.

Kickers

FIELD GOALS

1. **Adam Vinatieri, Patriots.** Not only has he been consistently successful, he has done it in freezing conditions and snowstorms.
2. **John Carney, Saints.** His pinpoint accuracy—he missed just four of 31 field-goal attempts last season—is a tribute to his flawless mechanics.
3. **Olindo Mare, Dolphins.** He has corrected the mechanical flaws he used to have. He has maintained his great range and is deadly accurate from inside 50 yards.

KICKOFFS

1. **Jason Hanson, Lions.** Opponents frequently start their possessions at the 20 because of Hanson's consistent kickoffs.
2. **Sebastian Janikowski, Raiders.** Janikowski's leg can't be matched. He occasionally drives the ball through the end zone.
3. **Martin Gramatica, Buccaneers.** Not only does he have the ability to boom the ball to the back of the end zone, he has improved his kickoff placement. He puts his kickoffs close to the sideline, where returners have little running room.

Punters

1. **Shane Lechler, Raiders.** He gets a lot of air under his punts, giving his coverage team time to get into position, and also has great range.
2. **Todd Sauerbrun, Panthers.** He has a tremendously strong leg but has been accused of outkicking his coverage. Last season, though, he led the league in net average (38.9 yards).
3. **Tom Rouen, Denver.** He averaged 45.3 yards per punt last season and has a great ability to place the ball inside the 20 on corner kicks.

Kickoff returners

1. **Ronney Jenkins, Chargers.** He's a big-play man who has great ability in space and shows a rare burst that allows him to reach the smallest of holes. He has a second gear in the open field and almost never gets caught from behind.

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The War Room's unit rankings of all 32 teams, from 1 (the Rams' quarterbacks, for example) to 32 (the Dolphins' QBs), are based on performance last season and offseason moves via free agency, trades and the draft. The number at far right denotes the cumulative ranking for that team at the nine positions listed. The lower the score, the better.

Team	QB	RB	WR	TE	OL	DL	LB	DB	ST	TOTAL
St. Louis	1	1	1	19	6	10	13	3	16	70
Oakland	6	5	6	14	2	8	32	1	8	82
Denver	10	7	5	1	5	29	10	28	1	96
San Francisco	3	6	2	22	1	3	22	16	24	99
Philadelphia	5	26	11	10	26	7	11	2	4	102
Indianapolis	4	2	3	5	7	26	18	26	13	104
Tampa Bay	18	15	25	7	8	5	12	8	14	112
New Orleans	9	21	10	13	3	6	24	14	17	117
Green Bay	2	10	27	4	25	2	17	6	31	124
NY Jets	15	9	16	18	19	20	6	9	15	127
Pittsburgh	14	4	15	25	16	9	2	11	32	128
New England	12	17	12	20	17	19	16	10	7	130
Seattle	16	11	22	24	11	15	3	7	29	138
Buffalo	7	23	7	6	13	32	29	19	10	146
Chicago	17	16	4	28	15	11	5	30	21	147
Miami	32	3	23	21	20	13	20	4	18	154
Washington	28	12	24	26	14	18	1	5	28	156
Kansas City	20	13	19	2	4	27	26	25	22	158
Dallas	29	25	9	29	24	12	8	15	9	160
San Diego	21	19	29	11	30	16	7	24	3	160
Tennessee	11	18	26	3	21	17	25	18	26	165
Carolina	31	30	18	8	10	21	19	31	2	170
Cleveland	19	20	28	27	22	4	14	13	23	170
Arizona	26	27	21	12	9	31	23	17	12	178
NY Giants	24	8	20	17	27	1	27	27	27	178
Atlanta	22	22	30	15	31	28	15	12	6	181
Cincinnati	23	14	8	32	29	22	4	29	20	181
Jacksonville	8	24	17	23	32	23	28	23	19	197
Detroit	25	28	13	30	23	25	21	22	11	198
Minnesota	13	31	14	9	18	30	31	32	25	203
Baltimore	27	29	31	16	28	14	9	20	30	204
Houston	30	32	32	31	12	24	30	21	5	217

2. **Darrick Vaughn, Falcons.** He has great change-of-direction ability and a second gear in the open field. He sees all the holes in coverage.
3. **Steve Smith, Panthers.** A rangy-looking returner with long strides and deceptive speed, Smith explodes into holes and shows a tremendous second gear.

Punt returners

1. **Jermaine Lewis, Texans.** He has great vision and is decisive, which enables him to hit the smallest of seams.
2. **Desmond Howard, Lions.** He has been a bust as a receiver, but there's no denying his productivity as a returner. Howard makes sharp cuts and has a special ability to feel where the coverage is around him.
3. **Troy Brown, Patriots.** He came up big late in the season and in the playoffs, taking advantage of every crease he saw in opponents' coverage.

Head coaches

1. **Bill Belichick, Patriots.** He took a team with low expectations and marginal talent and molded it into a Super Bowl champion—all while managing to avoid a quarterback controversy. Belichick is a great talent evaluator, and nobody is better on game day.
2. **Bill Cowher, Steelers.** He's the longest-tenured head coach in the league, and for good reason. He never fails to motivate and finds a way to stay on top, even though he loses key players every year.

3. **Steve Mariucci, 49ers.** It hasn't taken long for Mariucci to get the 49ers back into title contention. Along the way, he has helped turn Jeff Garcia, a former CFL quarterback, into an MVP candidate.
4. **Andy Reid, Eagles.** Criticized for sitting Donovan McNabb in the quarterback's rookie season, Reid doesn't look too bad now. After finishing one game shy of the Super Bowl last season, the Eagles seem primed for another run this year.
5. **Mike Martz, Rams.** The mastermind of the Rams' potent passing attack, Martz has surrounded himself with great personnel and a bulletproof game plan.

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS

1. **Mike Mularkey, Steelers.** He got great production from quarterback Kordell Stewart, squeezed the most out of running back Jerome Bettis and brought receiver Plaxico Burress to life. Not bad for a first-year coordinator.
2. **Tom Moore, Colts.** His no-huddle offense and two-tight end sets create matchup nightmares for opponents. He's constantly adding wrinkles to an already-sophisticated offense.
3. **Norv Turner, Dolphins.** His offenses do a terrific job of setting up play-action by running first, which keeps defenses on their heels.
4. **Brad Childress, Eagles.** He has had a huge hand in the development of McNabb and has worked closely with Reid on the play calls.
5. **Charlie Weis, Patriots.** Showed great coaching ability when he changed the entire offense for quarterback Tom Brady after Drew Bledsoe went down early in the season.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS

1. **Lovie Smith, Rams.** He took one of the league's worst defenses and turned it into one of the best by simplifying schemes and letting his players take advantage of their natural skills.
2. **Monte Kiffin, Buccaneers.** The way he disguises his schemes is what makes his defense so effective. Kiffin is a master at discerning his talent pluses and taking advantage of them.
3. **Jim Johnson, Eagles.** He runs one of the most aggressive schemes in the NFL. It forces quarterbacks into mistakes and results in ballcarriers frequently being tackled behind the line of scrimmage.
4. **Marvin Lewis, Redskins.** His defense struggled a bit in Baltimore last season, but he had to deal with a lot of injuries. Overall, nobody has a better feel for what his guys do best.
5. **Tim Lewis, Steelers.** He exploits an opponent's weakness by calling the right plays at the right times. Under Lewis, the Steelers' 3-4 scheme has made superstars out of linebackers Joey Porter and Jason Gildon.

SPECIAL TEAMS COACHES

1. **Mike Westhoff, Jets.** He does a great job of using his talent, putting players in positions where they can maximize their abilities and make plays.
2. **Scott O'Brien, Panthers.** He's one of the most organized coaches in the league. His attention to detail is reflected in the consistently solid play of his units.
3. **Bobby April, Rams.** His sideline emotion is no act. The way his players go about their business shows he does a terrific job of motivating.

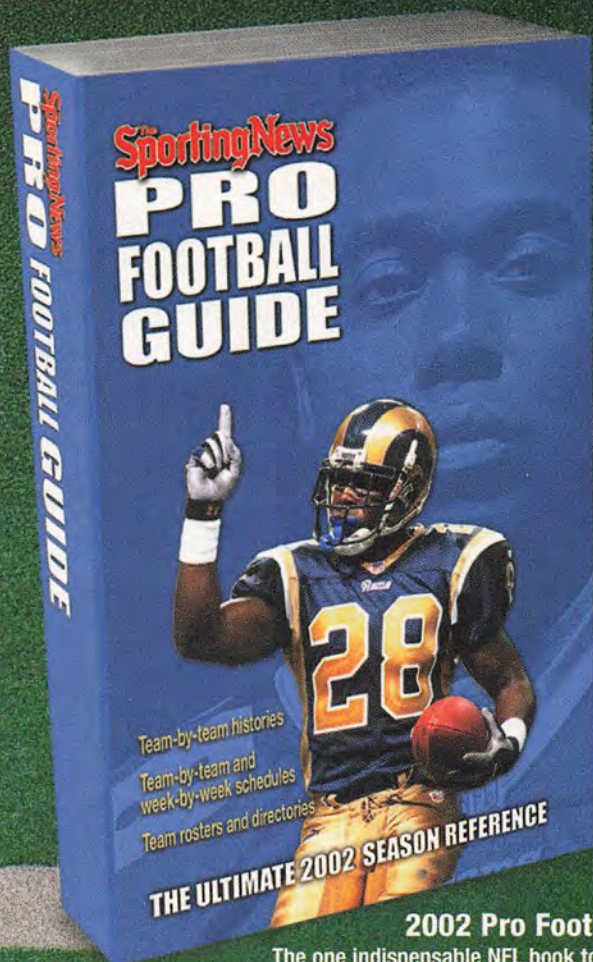
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The War Room, a team of football scouts headed by Gary Horton, analyzes NFL and college players, coaches and teams exclusively for THE SPORTING NEWS.

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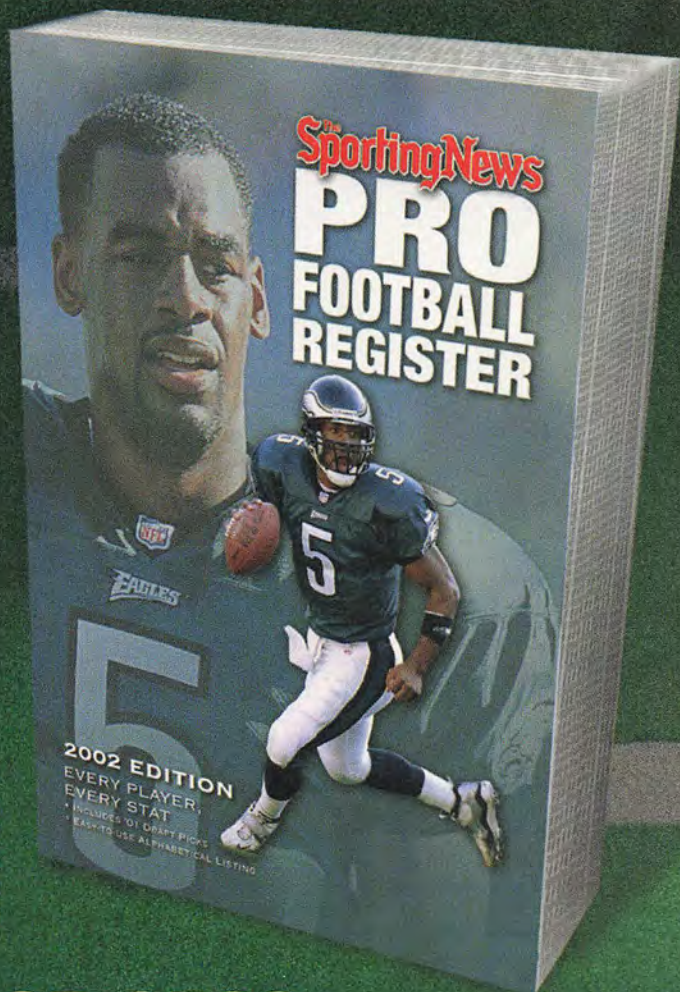


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Cowboys



Dallas needs more scoring from Ismail, who caught only two TD passes in 2001.

JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

BY JEAN-JACQUES TAYLOR

The Cowboys haven't had a winning season since 1998. They haven't won a playoff game since the 1996 season. And for the first time since 1990, they won't play on *Monday Night Football*.

But a feeling of optimism has engulfed the club's training facility. Owner/G.M. Jerry Jones insists the bevy of offseason moves he has made to upgrade the defense, plus a stellar draft and the continued development of quarterback Quincy Carter, will make the Cowboys more competitive than they have been the past two seasons. Of course, that wouldn't take much.

Dallas is 10-22 under coach Dave Campo, including a last-place finish in the NFC East in 2001. However, Jones made the most of a good cap situation this offseason. Although the Cowboys finished fourth in the NFL in defense last season, they were not a dominant group. If you combine sacks, forced fumbles, interceptions and defensive touchdowns, the Cowboys totaled 65. Only Minnesota had fewer.

Campo figured the best way to make the Cowboys better was to increase their number of playmakers on defense and improve their special teams. That's exactly what he did in signing defensive tackle La'Roi Glover, linebacker Kevin Hardy and cornerback

Bryant Westbrook. He also added excellent deep snapper Jeff Robinson to a special teams unit that suffered a league-high six kicks blocked and went through two deep snappers.

COACHING Strategies—The Cowboys have generally used a timing-based passing offense and a running game founded on the I-formation.

That is changing. Enter Bruce Coslet and the West Coast offense.

Dallas now will use more split-back formations and one-back looks. Dallas also will increase the use of crossing patterns in an attempt to get the ball to wide receivers Joey Galloway and Rocket Ismail on the move, taking advantage of their speed.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	at Houston	8:30	Nov. 10	Open date
Sept. 15	TENNESSEE	1:00	Nov. 17	at Indianapolis 1:00
Sept. 22	at Philadelphia	1:00	Nov. 24	JACKSONVILLE 1:00
Sept. 29	at St. Louis	1:00	Nov. 28	WAS. (Thanks.) 4:05
Oct. 6	N.Y. GIANTS	1:00	Dec. 8	SAN FRAN. 1:00
Oct. 13	CAROLINA	1:00	Dec. 15	at N.Y. Giants 4:15
Oct. 20	at Arizona	4:15	Dec. 21	PHI. (Sat.) 8:30
Oct. 27	SEATTLE	1:00	Dec. 29	at Washington 1:00
Nov. 3	at Detroit	1:00	Strength of schedule: 23rd	

Coslet, though, also is known for his infatuation with the deep ball. The Cowboys ranked near the bottom of the league in completions of 25 yards or more, and their quarterbacks combined to throw just 14 touchdown passes. The team simply didn't make big plays.

On defense, there are several talented newcomers, and coordinator Mike Zimmer's biggest task is to figure out how to get the most out of Glover, Hardy and rookie safety Roy Williams. He will have to be creative but should be able to play the aggressive style he favors. Zimmer doesn't care about another top-five finish in the defensive rankings. He wants a club that sacks the quarterback and forces turnovers. Dallas had only nine interceptions in 2001, a figure it expects to double this season.

Style—The Cowboys, who will have one of the youngest teams in the NFL, have filled their coaching staff with effective teachers. Running backs coach Galen Hall, linebackers coach Gary Gibbs, Coslet, receivers coach Wes Chandler and defensive tackles coach Andre Patterson have all been head coaches at the college or professional level.

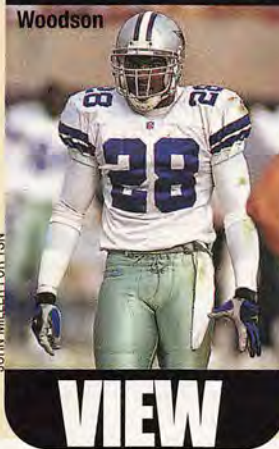
The teaching ability will be especially important in the transition to the West Coast offense, which will require additional time for the veterans to grasp.

On defense, Zimmer is a forceful, intimi-

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

They probably helped themselves as much as any team in the offseason. Defensive coordinator **Mike Zimmer** did an excellent job getting the most out of his players last year, so they should be that much better with the added talent. **La'Roi Glover** and **Kevin Hardy** will give them an added dimension to their pass rush. If **Bryant Westbrook** can return to his pre-injury form and **Mario Edwards** can continue to improve, they will be fine in coverage, but there are still some questions. Safety **Roy Williams**, their No. 1 draft pick, should become a Pro Bowl player in the near future. But moving **Darren Woodson**, a natural strong safety to free safety, does not fit his strengths. ... On offense, they still have big questions to answer at quarter-

OUTSIDE



JOHN MILLER FOR TSN

VIEW

THE COWBOYS

back, center and tight end. With new coordinator **Bruce Coslet** installing a West Coast offense, it will be interesting to see who wins the quarterback battle—**Quincy Carter** or rookie **Chad Hutchinson**. Carter showed flashes at the end of last season, but I wouldn't be surprised if Hutchinson, who has played in a similar offense, ends up as the starter. Ultimately, the offensive production will depend on whether they have a legitimate NFL quarterback. ... With **Mark Stepnoski** gone, there will most likely be a drop-off at center unless rookie **Andre Gurode** can learn the offense quickly and beat out **Matt Lehr**. ... Rookie **Antonio Bryant** could give them the big, physical wide receiver over the middle that they have been looking for.

dating coach who demands the most from his players. Secondary coach Clancy Pendergast is widely considered one of the top young coaches in the NFL. Patterson and defensive ends coach Jim Jeffcoat have the respect of their players and have learned to get the most from them.

Then there is Campo, the ultimate players coach. His teams play with maximum effort. They play smart and make few mistakes. Now that the talent base has been improved, Campo will be expected to have the Cowboys in contention for a playoff spot in December. If not, he'll probably be looking for a new job in January. **GRADE: B+**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Carter is the man—for now. Jones loves his ability

to create big plays out of chaos as well as his work ethic and leadership skills. Carter has a charisma that has captivated Jones, and he's going to get every opportunity to prove he can be a top-notch quarterback.

Last season, Carter struggled in the preseason and in his first start with his mechanics. Then, he missed seven weeks with a sprained thumb but spent the time working on his conditioning and mechanics.

When he returned, Carter played much better, leading Dallas to a 3-3 record. In a win over the 49ers, he completed 15 of 25 passes for 241 yards and two touchdowns. In each of those six games, he also had at least one completion of 35 yards, proving he can throw the deep ball. That's important because the deep threat will open routes underneath and create more space in the running game.

Carter completed only 51 percent of his passes, but that figure should increase considerably because the West Coast offense emphasizes shorter passes, Coslet's taste for deep throws notwithstanding. With the continued improvement in Carter's mechanics, he should be more accurate.

If he adapts well to the West Coast offense, he might be one of the most improved players in the league. If not, the Cowboys have options.

Dallas signed Chad Hutchinson, who spent the last four years as a pitcher in the St. Louis Cardinals organization. He is 6-5, 230

pounds and has good mobility. The team expects him to push Carter in 2003.

Anthony Wright, who had surgery to repair a torn ACL last October, and Clint Stoerner will battle for the third spot. Ryan Leaf, who played poorly in four games for Dallas last year and did not appear to be a good fit for Coslet's West Coast offense, was released in May. **GRADE: C-**

Running backs—Sometime in October, Emmitt Smith should become the NFL's all-

time leading rusher. However, he is coming off his worst season since 1990 and will be 33 when the season starts. He gained more than 1,000 rushing yards last year for an NFL-record 11th consecutive season, and his performance at the end of the season, when he averaged 4.7 yards per carry, gave Jones and Campo the feeling he can be the feature back for at least one more season. Still, the Cowboys plan to spend the second half of the season trying to determine whether Troy Hambrick can replace Smith.

Last year, Hambrick gained 579 yards and averaged 5.1 yards per carry. More important, he showed big-play capability with runs of 80, 47, 36 and 27 yards.

Michael Wiley showed he can be a solid third-down back because he is an excellent blocker and rarely makes mistakes on blitz pickups. He also averaged 7.3 yards on 34 carries and had runs of 58 and 46 yards while catching 16 passes for 99 yards. The Cowboys want to get him more touches on third down and make him a bigger part of their third-down offense.

Dallas also added the best blocking fullback available in the draft, Jamar Martin, who will push Robert Thomas for the starting job. **GRADE: C+**

Receivers—Galloway spent last season frustrated with a system that limited him to a career-low 13.4 yards a catch and didn't allow him to do what he does best: catch the deep ball.

That changed in the last six games with Carter starting. Galloway averaged 15.6

2001 results

Sept. 9	TAMPA BAY	L	6-10
Sept. 23	SAN DIEGO	L	21-32
Sept. 30	at Philadelphia	L	18-40
Oct. 7	at Oakland	L	21-28
Oct. 15	WASHINGTON	W	9-7
Oct. 21	Open date		
Oct. 28	ARIZONA	W	17-3
Nov. 4	at NYG (OT)	L	24-27
Nov. 11	at Atlanta	L	13-20
Nov. 18	PHILADELPHIA	L	3-36
Nov. 22	DENVER	L	24-26
Dec. 2	at Washington	W	20-14
Dec. 9	N.Y. GIANTS	W	20-13
Dec. 16	at Seattle	L	3-29
Dec. 23	at Arizona	L	10-17
Dec. 30	SAN FRANCISCO	W	27-21
Jan. 6	at Detroit	L	10-15

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. The addition of DT La'Roi Glover and LB Kevin Hardy will allow the Cowboys to get nearly as many sacks this season as they combined for the last two seasons (49).
2. Quincy Carter will surprise the critics and finish the season with a passer rating of 80 after throwing at least 16 touchdown passes.
3. Emmitt Smith will gain 540 rushing yards in the first six games to become the all-time rushing leader in NFL history, surpassing Walter Payton's mark of 16,726 yards.
4. Joey Galloway and Rocket Ismail will combine for 1,800 receiving yards and 10 touchdowns as coordinator Bruce Coslet opens up the offense and throws the ball deep.
5. Coach Dave Campo will lead Dallas to its first winning season since 1998, thanks to a terrific defense and solid production from the special teams.



Hardy



At 5-10, 230, Coakley isn't the league's biggest linebacker, but he has a knack for making big plays.

JOHN MILLER FOR TSN

yards per catch in those games and turned in a six-catch, 146-yard performance against San Francisco.

For the Cowboys to get the most out of Galloway and Ismail, the team must take advantage of their speed. That's the plan this season. Coslet likes to stretch the field vertically with his offense and give his receivers an opportunity to make plays.

For three seasons, receivers coach Chandler has been an advocate for the young receivers to get substantial playing time. Former coordinator Jack Reilly favored veterans, but that should change this season. Second-year wideout Ken-Yon Rambo impressed the coaches last season and will get a chance to be on the field as the third receiver. He gained 15 pounds of muscle in the offseason, pushing him to 205, but hasn't lost any speed. The Cowboys think the added muscle will allow Rambo to make plays in the middle of the field. He will be pushed by second-round pick Antonio Bryant, who runs good routes, has good hands and is an explosive leaper.

Because of Bryant's size, competitiveness and ability to go for the ball, the coaches are talking about adding him to the goal-line offense and using him on fade routes. Reggie Swinton made his mark as a kickoff and punt returner last season, but he also will

get a chance to contribute in the offense this season.

The Cowboys attempted to fill their big void at tight end by signing veteran Tony McGee to a three-year contract. Although he has not caught more than 30 passes in a season since 1997, McGee has good hands and an intricate knowledge of the offense. After all, he was the Bengals' tight end for five seasons when Coslet was the head coach. Coslet says McGee can be an effective receiver, an above-average blocker and a coach on the field for his other tight ends, who are learning the offense. Coslet wants a tight end who can operate in the middle of the field and take advantage of safeties playing toward the sideline to protect against the speed of Galloway and Ismail. Coslet says McGee still has enough speed to get open and knows how to find holes in zones.

Backups Mike Lucky and Robinson are considered better blockers than receivers, though each should play quite a bit because Coslet wants to use a lot of formations with one back and two tight ends.

GRADE: C+

Line—Last October, the Cowboys talked about trading left tackle Flozell Adams to at least one team. In March, they made him their franchise player and later signed him to a one-year contract that will pay him \$4.9 million this season. Though Adams is not a Pro Bowl-caliber player, he's still better than any tackle the Cowboys could have replaced him with in the free-agent market.

Retaining Adams means the Cowboys will

continue to have a good, young line to protect Carter and create holes for Smith and Hambrick. Only Larry Allen, still considered one of the NFL's best guards, is as old as 30.

Right tackle Solomon Page, scheduled to become a free agent at the end of the season, is coming off a solid year and should be motivated to turn in the best performance of his career.

It's unlikely Dallas will keep both tackles, so they will be competing with one another to prove their worth to the organization.

The most intriguing battles for playing time will come at center and right guard, where Matt Lehr, Andre Gurode and Kelvin Garmon will compete. Lehr, a fifth-round pick in 2001, and Gurode, a second-round pick in 2002, can each play guard and center. Garmon started 16 games at right guard last season for the NFL's third-best running attack. Campo says he wants the two best players on the field.

With the addition of Gurode, the Cowboys now have quality depth in the line. Other players in the mix are center/guard Ben Fricke and tackles Char-ron Dorsey and Aaron Gibson. **GRADE: B-**

DEFENSE Line—If things work out as they hope, the Cowboys could have one of the top defensive lines in the league. But they need some luck and a lot of health.

Dallas signed Glover to play the "3" technique in their defense. The position calls for him to play on the outside shoulder of the guard, making him more difficult to block. It also calls for a player who can use his speed and quickness to penetrate into the backfield and create chaos. The Cowboys don't need great size at this spot, and Glover is 6-2, 285.

The Cowboys will line up Glover, who produced 25 sacks the last two seasons, next to Greg Ellis—one of the club's steadiest players. They hope Glover will force teams to double-team him, creating more space for Ellis to operate. Brandon Noble is solid at the other tackle spot, and Michael Myers, who started 16 games last season and

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-8	Roy Williams	S	Oklahoma	Expected to provide the big plays Dallas has been missing.
2-37	Andre Gurode	G/C	Colorado	Has the nasty disposition and leadership skills coaches love.
2-63	Antonio Bryant	WR	Pittsburgh	Isn't afraid to go across the middle and fight for the ball.
3-75	Derek Ross	CB	Ohio State	If he doesn't start, he'll help on special teams and in the nickel.
4-129	Jamar Martin	FB	Ohio State	Prototypical blocking fullback will compete for starting job this year.
5-168	Ralph Hunter	DB	Virginia Union	Terrific athlete probably will be tried first at corner, then at safety.
6-179	Tyson Walter	OT	Ohio State	A good training camp could earn him spot on practice squad.
6-208	DeVere Johnson	WR	Sacred Heart	Raw prospect has a lot to learn; likely destined for practice squad.
6-211	Bob Slowikowski	TE	Virginia Tech	Has to show something at camp to make team as extra tight end.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-22	David LaFleur	TE	LSU	Unsigned free agent
'98-8	Greg Ellis	DE	North Carolina	Starter with Cowboys
'99-20	Ebenezer Ekuban	DE	North Carolina	Starter with Cowboys
'00	None			
'01	None			

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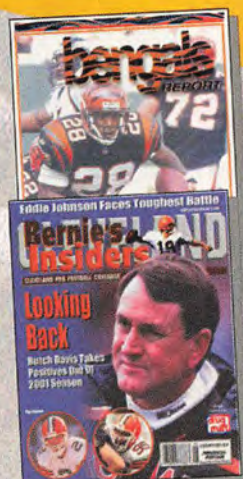
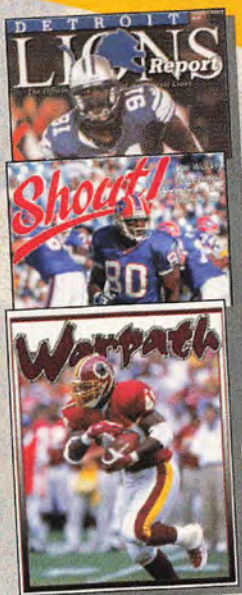
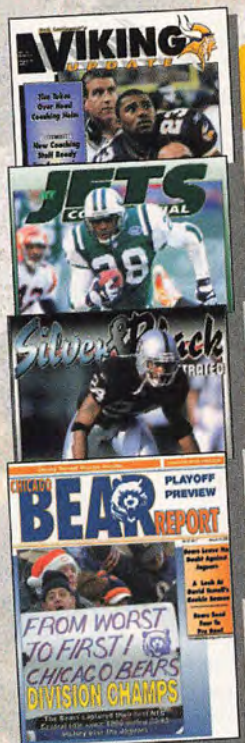
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recorded 72 tackles, will back up Glover.

But the key to the defensive line will be how well left end Ebenezer Ekuban plays. The former first-round pick was hobbled by injuries the past two seasons that robbed him of his effectiveness. He missed 15 games last season with a herniated disk in his back but should be ready for the start of training camp.

Ekuban has a burst off the line and a body lean that can get him to the quarterback. He also has a nasty attitude and is a fierce competitor. But it's time for him to produce. Peppi Zellner and Byron Frisch can put pressure on the quarterback, but they

knee but expects to be ready for training camp. The team has told Hardy his main job is to put pressure on the quarterback. If the Cowboys are going to get more turnovers this season, they feel they must increase pressure on the quarterback.

The addition of Hardy also means the Cowboys have more depth than they've had in the past. Markus Steele, who started 10 games last season, will be a solid backup at all three linebacker spots. He's good against the run but needs to work on his coverage skills. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—You want to know how good the Cowboys expect Roy Williams to be? They think he will be so effective that they are moving Darren Woodson from strong safety to free safety to make room for Williams.

Dallas drafted Williams in the first round because it think he's the type of defensive player who can dominate a game at several different levels—and the Cowboys are going to explore all of them.

They will blitz him, they'll use him to cover slot receivers, and they'll use him as a linebacker in some nickel situations. The Cowboys also will play him close to the line, so he can be a force against the run. They expect to feed off his skills and to use his knack for making big plays to add to their total.

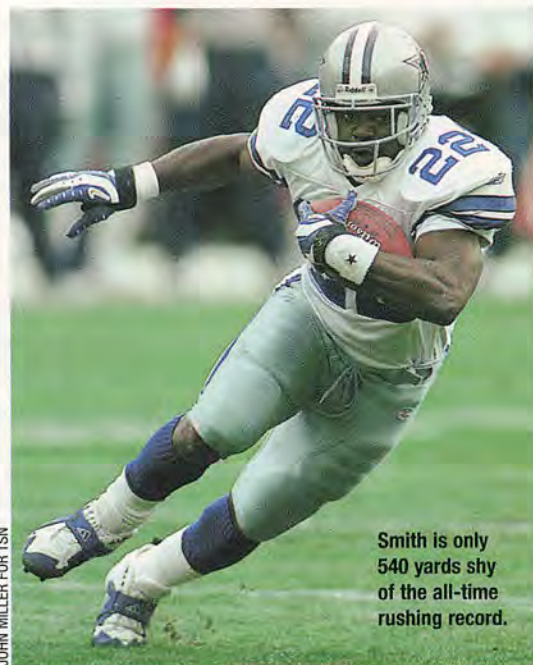
In adding Westbrook, the team got a big corner with big-play potential. He missed the first six games of last season, recovering from a ruptured Achilles' tendon but is expected to be ready for the start of training camp.

Dallas expects third-round pick Derek Ross, another big corner, to compete against Mario Edwards and Duane Hawthorne—the primary two starters last season—for the other cornerback job. The Cowboys have depth in their secondary that they haven't had in years.

Zimmer hopes that having bigger, better cornerbacks will allow him to be more aggressive in his scheme. If it works out as he plans, he won't have to position his cornerbacks five to seven yards off the line, and his safeties won't have to provide deep help on so many plays. **GRADE: B-**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Cowboys were hurting in the kicking game last season, making only 22-of-33 field-goal attempts and suffering all those blocks. Not coincidentally, last season was their first in a decade without long snapper Dale Hellestrae, considered one of the NFL's best.

So Jones signed Robinson to solve the problem. He is considered one of the top snappers in the NFL and should ease many of the kicking-game concerns. With him, the



Smith is only 540 yards shy of the all-time rushing record.

JOHN MILLER FOR TSN

don't have the physical skills and size that Ekuban possesses. **GRADE: B**

Linebackers—In the past, Jones didn't like giving linebackers big contracts. Other positions, he surmised, were more important. Clearly, there has been a shift in philosophy.

Last season, Dexter Coakley became the first Dallas linebacker with a salary-cap figure of more than \$1 million when he signed a contract that probably will keep him in Dallas for the rest of his career. This off-season, the club re-signed middle linebacker Dat Nguyen to a six-year deal and signed outside linebacker Kevin Hardy to a one-year, \$2.5 million contract.

It's easy to justify the big contracts because each of the starting three is a playmaker. Coakley has been to the Pro Bowl in two of the last three seasons, and Nguyen recorded a team-high 172 tackles last season.

Hardy, though, is the key. The Cowboys signed him to be a pass rusher. They're going to rush him from the edge in some situations and use him as a rush end in others. He missed the last seven games of last season with a cartilage injury in his right

Moves

Key additions

DT La'Roi Glover
LB Kevin Hardy
QB Chad Hutchinson
TE/LS Jeff Robinson
CB Bryant Westbrook

Free agent/Saints
Free agent/Jaguars
Free agent
Free agent/Rams
Free agent/Lions

Key losses

TE Jackie Harris
TE Johnny Huggins
S Izell Reese
C Mark Stepnoski
S George Teague

Free agent
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Broncos
Free agent
Free agent

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Records

2001 regular-season record: 5-11 (5th in NFC East); 4-4 in division; 5-7 in conference; 0-4 vs. AFC; 4-4 at home; 1-7 on road; 4-8 on artificial turf; 1-3 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Dave Campo's regular-season record: 10-22 in two seasons with Cowboys.

Campo's postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 34-46 (.425, ranks 23rd in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*275.1	14	29
Rushing offense	*136.5	2	3
Passing offense	*138.6	15	31
Scoring offense	246	15	30
Total defense	*287.4	2	4
Rushing defense	*106.9	6	13
Passing defense	*180.6	2	3
Scoring defense	338	9	20
Takeaways	25	12	T23
Giveaways	34	10	22
Turnover differential	-9	12	T24
Sacks	24	14	30
Sacks allowed	34	6	13

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

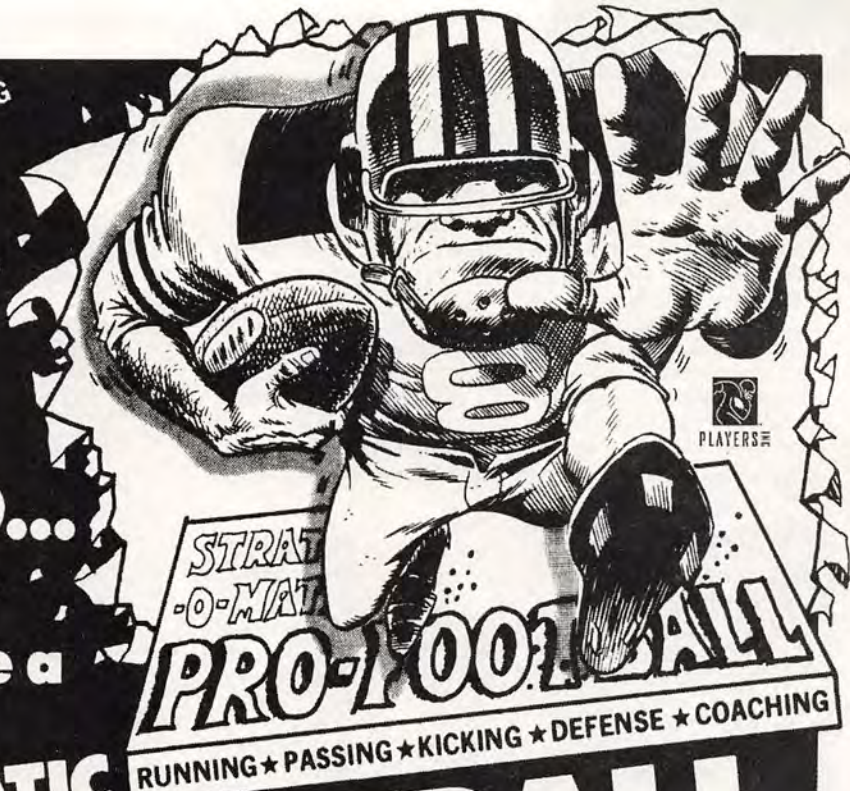
Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dave Campo	Head coach	14	14
Bruce Coslet	Offensive coordinator	21	1
Mike Zimmer	Defensive coordinator	9	9
Joe Avezzano	Special teams	13	13
Bill Bates	Assistant special teams	5	5
Wes Chandler	Receivers	3	3
Gary Gibbs	Linebackers	1	1
Galen Hall	Running backs	1	1
Steve Hoffman	Kickers/defensive QC	14	14
Jim Jeffcoat	Defensive ends	5	5
Joe Juraszek	Strength & conditioning	6	6
Andre Patterson	Defensive tackles	6	3
Clancy Pendergast	Secondary	8	7
Greg Seamon	Tight ends/offensive QC	1	1
Frank Verducci	Offensive line	4	1
Wade Wilson	Quarterbacks	3	3

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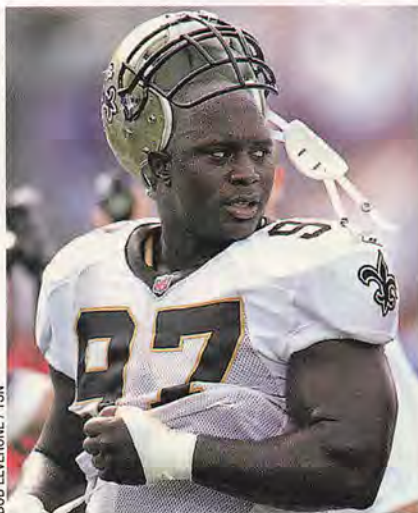
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REALIGNMENT reality

The NFC East stays intact with the exception of Arizona, which has moved on to the NFC West and will be missed. The Cardinals often were the source of two victories for division foes. Though Washington is expected to change under Steve Spurrier, every team in the NFC East tends to concentrate on running the ball and playing good defense. Dallas is building its team in that mold. The Cowboys spent the offseason adding talent to a defensive unit that finished fourth in the NFL. Now, they want quarterback Quincy Carter to manage the game smartly, limit his mistakes and let the defense put the Cowboys in position to win games. Dallas has been in the same division as the Eagles, Redskins and Giants for decades. The Cowboys know them well and have a unique rivalry with each. If Dallas wants to reach the playoffs, it will need to sustain a winning streak against Washington that has reached nine games.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

The Cowboys think Glover will make a perfect fit as their "3" technique defensive tackle.

Cowboys expect kicker Tim Seder and punter Micah Knorr to be more effective because neither will have to spend as much time focusing on the snap.

Swinton did a fine job as kick and punt returner in his first season. He returned one punt for a touchdown and had a long kick return of 77 yards. However, he fumbled three times, and that's a problem Campo says must be corrected. But the Cowboys like Swinton's big-play potential and his ability to put them in consistently good field position.

Seder made only 11 of 17 field-goal attempts last season and missed much of the final two months with a severely sprained ankle. Knorr will have to fight for a spot on the roster after finishing the season with a 31.1 net average, one of the NFL's worst. **GRADE: B**

BOTTOM LINE The Cowboys have a defense loaded with talent and an offense that should be able to score enough to significantly increase the team's victory total from the last two seasons. Look for Dallas to reach the playoffs, ending two years of pain and suffering.

TSN

Jean-Jacques Taylor covers the Cowboys for The Dallas Morning News.

Projected depth chart

Offense

- WR** ● Joey Galloway
■ Ken-Yon Rambo
LT ■ Flozell Adams
● Larry Allen
LG ● Larry Allen
■ Kelvin Garmon
C ■ Andre Gurode
■ Matt Lehr
RG ■ Kelvin Garmon
■ Ben Fricke
RT ■ Solomon Page
■ Char-Ron Dorsey
TE ■ Tony McGee
■ Jeff Robinson
WR ● Raghib Ismail
■ Antonio Bryant
QB ■ Quincy Carter
■ Chad Hutchinson
RB ■ Emmitt Smith
■ Troy Hambrick
FB ■ Robert Thomas
■ Jamar Martin

Defense

- LE** ■ Ebenezer Ekuban
■ Peppi Zellner
DT ■ Brandon Noble
■ John Nix
DT ● La'Roi Glover
■ Michael Myers
RE ● Greg Ellis
■ Byron Frisch
OLB ● Kevin Hardy
■ Markus Steele
MLB ■ Dat Nguyen
■ Jamal Brooks
OLB ● Dexter Coakley
■ Orantes Grant
LCB ■ Bryant Westbrook
■ Duane Hawthorne
RCB ■ Mario Edwards
■ Derek Ross
SS ■ Roy Williams
■ Tony Dixon
FS ■ Darren Woodson
■ Ralph Hunter

Specialists

- K** ■ Tim Seder
P ■ Micah Knorr
PR ■ Reggie Swinton
PR ■ Reggie Swinton
LS ● Jeff Robinson
● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

COWBOYS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
17	Carter, Quincy	6-2/231	10-13-77	2	Georgia	D2a/01	8/8
	Hutchinson, Chad	6-5/230	2-21-77	R	Stanford	FA/02	—
5	Stoerner, Clint	6-2/210	12-29-77	2	Arkansas	FA/00	4/2
2	Wright, Anthony	6-1/207	2-14-76	3	South Carolina	FA/00	4/3
Running backs							
42	Hambrick, Troy	6-1/255	11-6-76	3	Savannah State	FA/00	16/11
34	Martin, Jamar (FB)	5-11/244	4-12-80	R	Ohio State	D4/02	—
22	Smith, Emmitt	5-9/216	5-15-69	13	Florida	D1/90	14/14
36	Taylor, Tony	5-9/191	3-9-78	1	Northwestern State	FA/01	1/0
44	Thomas, Robert (FB)	6-1/273	12-1-74	5	Henderson St. (Ark.)	FA/98	5/5
32	Wiley, Michael	5-11/203	1-5-78	3	Ohio State	D5/00	16/0
Receivers							
14	Bryant, Antonio	6-1/188	3-9-81	R	Pittsburgh	D2b/02	—
85	Chiaverini, Darrin	6-2/210	10-12-77	3	Colorado	T-Cle/01	16/0
84	Galloway, Joey	5-11/197	11-20-71	8	Ohio State	T-Sea/00	16/16
81	Ismail, Rocket	5-11/183	11-18-69	10	Notre Dame	UFA/99	14/13
13	Johnson, De'Veon	6-4/211	R	Sacred Heart	D6b/02	—
86	Lucky, Mike (TE)	6-6/273	11-23-75	3	Arizona	D7a/99	16/5
82	McGee, Tony (TE)	6-4/248	4-21-71	2	Michigan	FA/02	11/9
87	Rambo, Ken-Yon	6-1/195	10-4-78	10	Ohio State	FA/01	13/0
88	Robinson, Jeff (TE)	6-4/275	2-20-70	10	Idaho	UFA/02	16/5
48	Slowikowski, Bob (TE)	6-5/261	10-30-79	R	Virginia Tech	D6c/02	—
80	Swinton, Reggie	6-0/175	7-24-75	1	Murray State	FA/01	15/1
89	Williams, Randal	6-3/214	5-24-78	1	New Hampshire	W-Jax/01	7/0
Offensive linemen							
76	Adams, Flozell (T)	6-7/335	5-18-75	4	Michigan State	D2/98	16/16
73	Allen, Larry (G)	6-3/326	11-27-71	9	Sonoma State (Calif.)	D2/94	16/16
79	Dorsey, Char-ron (T)	6-6/347	11-5-77	2	Florida State	D7c/01	8/2
66	Fricke, Ben (G)	6-0/280	11-3-75	4	Houston	FA/99	5/0
61	Garmon, Kelvin (G)	6-2/329	10-26-76	3	Baylor	D7b/99	16/16
63	Gibson, Aaron (T)	6-6/380	9-27-77	4	Wisconsin	W-Det/01	7/5
65	Gurode, Andre (G)	6-4/316	3-6-78	R	Colorado	D2a/02	—
68	Lehr, Matt (G)	6-2/292	4-25-79	2	Virginia Tech	D5/01	8/0
77	Page, Solomon (G)	6-4/321	2-27-76	4	West Virginia	D2/99	14/14
	Solvold, Mike (C)	6-6/244	9-30-77	R	Wisconsin	W-Min./01	8/0
74	Walter, Tyson (T)	6-4/303	3-17-78	R	Ohio State	D6a/02	—
Defensive linemen							
96	Ekuban, Ebenezer (E)	6-3/282	5-29-76	4	North Carolina	D1/99	1/1
98	Ellis, Greg (E)	6-6/275	8-14-75	5	North Carolina	D1/98	16/16
92	Evans, Demetric (E)	6-3/286	9-3-79	2	Georgia	FA/01	16/0
90	Frisch, Byron (E)	6-5/267	12-17-76	3	Brigham Young	FA/01	13/0
97	Glover, La'Roi (T)	6-2/285	7-4-74	7	San Diego State	UFA/02	16/16
72	Missouri, Dwayne (E)	6-5/260	12-23-78	2	Northwestern	FA/01	3/0
94	Myers, Michael	6-2/292	1-20-76	4	Alabama	D4/98	16/16
60	Nix, John (T)	6-1/326	11-24-76	2	Southern Mississippi	D7b/01	16/0
75	Noble, Brandon (T)	6-2/304	4-10-74	3	Penn State	FA/99	16/16
93	Zellner, Peppi (E)	6-5/262	3-14-75	4	Fort Valley (Ga.) State	D4b/99	16/15
Linebackers							
46	Adams, Keith	5-11/223	11-22-79	1	Clemson	FA/01	4/0
50	Brooks, Jamal	6-2/240	11-9-76	2	Hampton	FA/01	16/1
	Cerqua, Marq	5-11/223	4-3-77	R	Carson-Newman	W-T.B./01	3/0
52	Coakley, Dexter	5-10/230	10-20-72	6	Appalachian State	D3a/97	15/15
56	Grant, Orantes	6-0/230	3-18-78	3	Georgia	D7/00	10/1
51	Hardy, Kevin	6-4/248	7-24-73	7	Illinois	UFA/02	9/9
58	Mackey, Louis	6-1/225	12-29-77	2	Akron	FA/01	1/0
59	Nguyen, Dat	5-11/243	9-25-75	3	Texas A&M	D3/99	16/16
55	Steele, Markus	6-3/240	7-24-79	2	Southern California	D4/01	15/10
Defensive backs							
33	Bell, Jason (CB)	6-0/182	4-1-78	2	UCLA	FA/01	16/0
41	Dennis, Pat (CB)	6-0/213	6-3-78	3	Louisiana-Monroe	FA/01	11/0
24	Dixon, Tony (S)	6-1/213	6-18-79	2	Alabama	D2b/01	8/0
27	Edwards, Mario (CB)	6-0/191	12-1-75	3	Florida State	D6/00	16/15
38	Hawthorne, Duane (CB)	5-10/175	8-26-76	3	Northern Illinois	FA/99	16/11
47	Hunter, Ralph (CB)	6-2/202	R	Virginia Union	D5/02	—
20	Ross, Derek (CB)	5-10/210	1-5-80	R	Ohio State	D3/02	—
21	Scott, Lynn (S)	6-0/210	6-23-77	2	NW Oklahoma	FA/01	14/0
30	Westbrook, Bryant (CB)	6-0/198	12-19-74	6	Texas	UFA/02	10/3
31	Williams, Roy (S)	6-0/219	8-14-80	R	Oklahoma	D1/02	—
28	Woodson, Darren (S)	6-1/219	4-25-69	10	Arizona State	D2b/92	16/16
Specialists							
4	Knorr, Micah (P)	6-2/199	1-9-75	2	Utah State	FA/00	16/0
6	Seder, Tim (K)	5-9/197	9-17-74	2	Ashland	FA/00	8/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: DT Willie Blade, CB Shad Criss, P Filip Filipovic, WR Richmond Flowers, CB Dwayne Goodrich, LB Paris Johnson, WR Anthony Lucas, DT Daleroy Stewart, DE Colston Weatherington, TE James Whalen, TE Austin Wheatley, WR Bashir Yamini. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.

Giants

BY NEIL BEST

Being happy didn't work, so maybe being angry and edgy will. That is what the Giants are counting on after an offseason short on acquisitions and filled with players sniping publicly at one another and the organization. This is a chemistry experiment that could blow up, but general manager Ernie Accorsi was in no mood to spare anyone's feelings after a 7-9 season that followed a Super Bowl appearance.

Accorsi sensed the Giants got too comfortable after 2000, so why not have a little creative tension in the locker room? And so what if some players are annoyed about their contracts? Accorsi decided this is the year to get serious about fixing the team's salary-cap problems and create flexibility beginning in 2003.

"This was a very happy situation last year," Accorsi says. "The coach had an extension, the players were all signed, we're com-

ing off a Super Bowl—and we went 7-9. I am not exactly upset with the passions being stirred up, because I think this is a game that has to be played with passion."

When the dust settled, defensive end Michael Strahan, quarterback Kerry Collins and wide receiver Ike Hilliard were consuming more than 25 percent of the salary cap. Eleven starters or key reserves were gone from last year, and the team was counting on young players at several spots.

Several of the team's key players were mad at each other, notably Strahan and running back Tiki Barber, after Strahan criticized the organization and Barber criticized Strahan. Can all this be good?

"It's not the worst thing in the world," Barber says. "This is such an emotional game, you have to find that little extra to take you to that next level. And you can't ever really tell what it is."

COACHING Strategies—There was widespread frustration, from the front office to the locker room, with the team's failure last season to establish the running game. The apparent commitment to the pass was not very Giants-like, and it led to an offense without much consistency or identity. Coordinator Sean Payton will try to get back to the ground game that boosted the team into the Super Bowl after the 2000 season, in part by trying to get both Barber and Ron Davis involved.

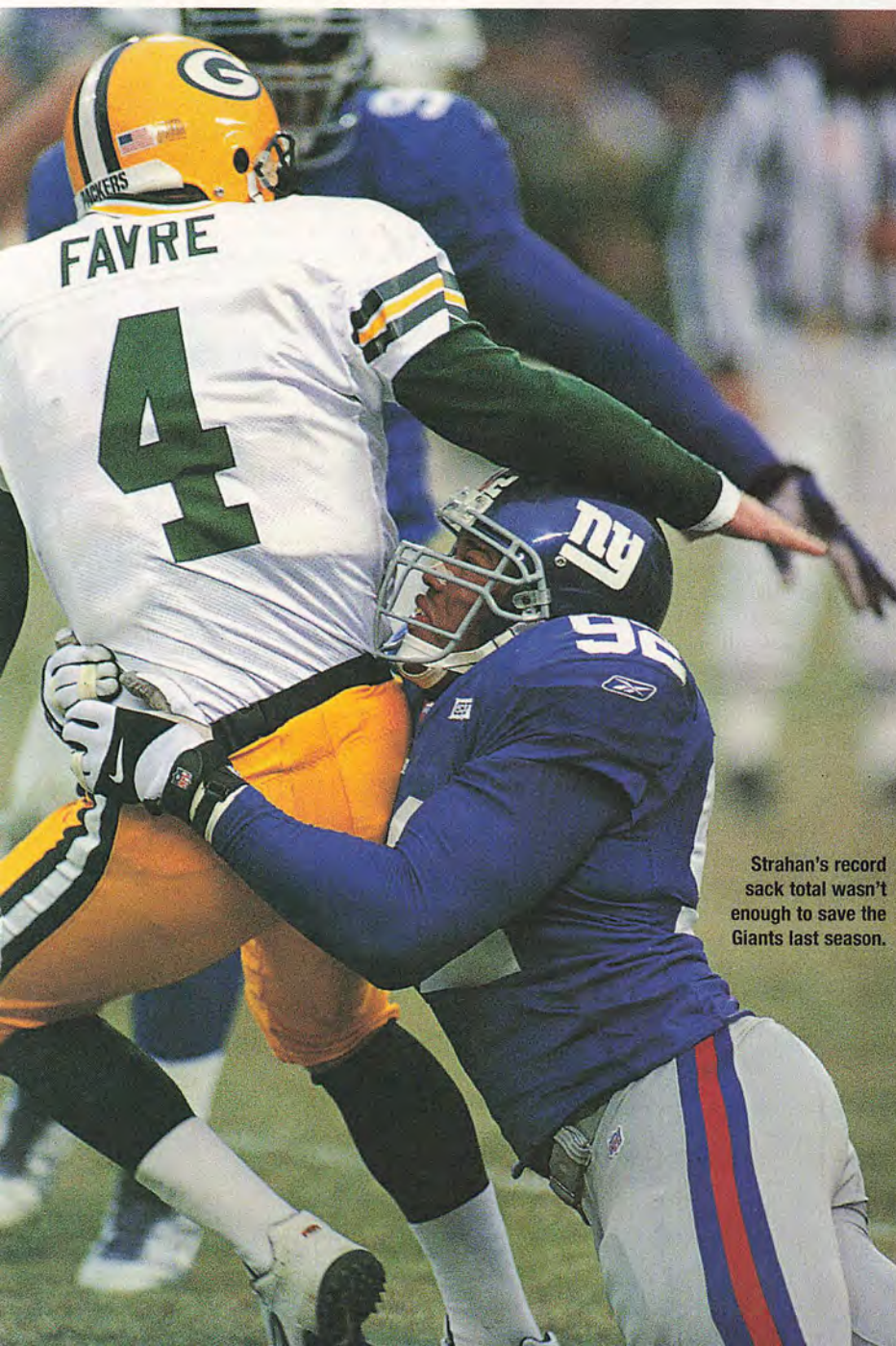
2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 5	S.F. (Thur.)	8:30	Nov. 10	at Minnesota	1:00
Sept. 15	at St. Louis	4:05	Nov. 17	WASHINGTON	1:00
Sept. 22	SEATTLE	4:15	Nov. 24	at Houston	4:15
Sept. 29	at Arizona	4:05	Dec. 1	TENNESSEE	1:00
Oct. 6	at Dallas	1:00	Dec. 8	at Washington	1:00
Oct. 13	ATLANTA	1:00	Dec. 15	DALLAS	4:15
Oct. 20	Open date		Dec. 22	at Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 28	at Phil. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 28	PHI. (Sat.)	1:30
Nov. 3	JACKSONVILLE	8:30	Strength of schedule: T 13th		

The new wrinkle should come from first-round draft pick Jeremy Shockey, a tight end who figures to give the team the threat up the middle and in the red zone it has lacked in recent years. With Shockey in the mix, Payton and Jim Fassel should be able to use some of the West Coast principles from their pasts.

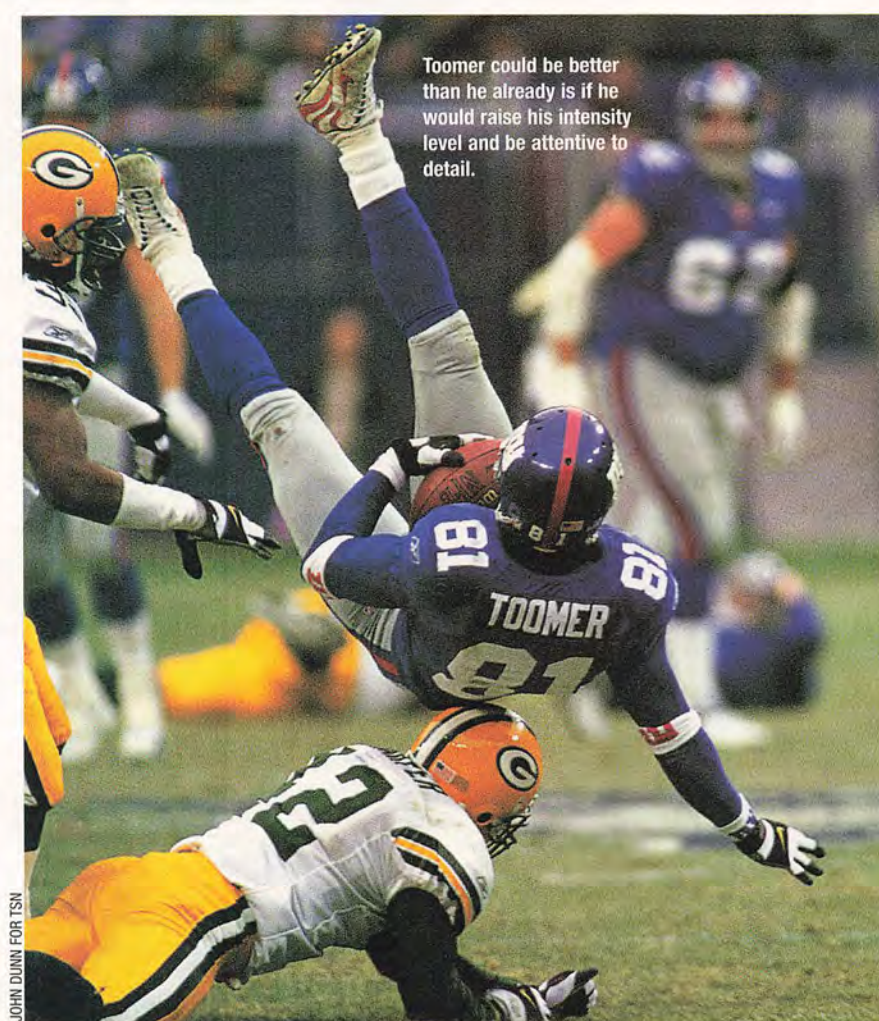
The defense won't change dramatically with the promotion of Johnnie Lynn from secondary coach to coordinator. John Fox's aggressive, sophisticated style will remain. But Lynn plans to streamline the thick Fox playbook in an attempt to cut down on the glaring mistakes, especially in the secondary.

The most intriguing change could come on special teams, where Bruce Read takes over as the third man in that role in three seasons. He is one of the brightest young special teams coaches in the NFL. The team focused heavily on speed and special teams help in the draft, which should give Read a head start.



Strahan's record sack total wasn't enough to save the Giants last season.

JOHN DUNN FOR TSN



Toomer could be better than he already is if he would raise his intensity level and be attentive to detail.

JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

Style—Players generally like Fassel, who is regarded mostly as a reasonable, player-oriented coach, though he does have a mean streak. He has had his run-ins with star players but generally has managed to keep controversies from getting out of control. He usually is able to rally the team through tough times.

If the Giants do not make the playoffs, the team might look to replace him, even though the cap squeeze has left him with a thin roster and he has two years left on a big-money contract.

Payton took even more heat from fans for last season's flop than Fassel, falling a long way from his boy genius days of 2000. Worse yet, Payton took a tumble in the eyes of some players, who loved his innovations when he first got the job. Still, they like his passion and cockiness, and they won't be surprised if he turns it around this season, especially if Shockey pans out and Barber is healthy and productive.

Lynn is more of an old-fashioned, fiery motivator type than Fassel or Payton. He has a permanently scratchy voice from yelling on the field, and he benefits from the added respect former NFL players get as coaches. Lynn is in a tough spot. That's

because Fox is a tough act to follow, and the defense must recover from losing two starters (linebacker Jessie Armstead and safety Sam Garnes) with no additions through free agency or high draft picks.

Perhaps the most important position coach is the offensive line's Jim McNally, a crusty throwback who is so enamored of his underdog line that he told the front office not to bring in any veteran help. One reason

the organization is willing to go into the season with three starters who never were drafted is the faith it has in McNally to squeeze a lot from so-so talent. **GRADE: B-**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—This is a pivotal season for Collins. He is in the last year of his contract and will be watched closely before the team makes a big financial commitment to him. Even if he signs an extension before the season, it will be modest in size and duration.

It's surprising that the best Giants quarterback since Phil Simms has gotten into this spot, especially with passing statistics over the past two seasons that have broken or set several team records. But that's what a league-record 23 fumbles and a 7-9 season will do.

Collins still is only 29 and not far from being among the top 10 quarterbacks. If he just eliminates most of the fumbles and does everything else the same, he should be fine. The trick might be doing it behind a very suspect line. Collins has a major league arm, but he is not very mobile and has not looked good throwing on the run. When he has time, he is strong and accurate.

Collins certainly is durable, throwing every pass for the team two years in a row. Still, the backup job is crucial, even more so if Collins struggles and his future comes into question. Second-year man Jesse Palmer has a powerful arm and studied furiously through the offseason, preparing for the potential of moving up to No. 2. A former fourth-round pick, Palmer enters the season with a more impressive resume than the one New England's Tom Brady brought into 2001. **GRADE: B-**

Running backs—The problem is the same as it was in 2001 and 2000. How do you take advantage of Dayne, getting him the touches he needs to establish a flow, when he is playing the same position as the offense's most dynamic playmaker?

Tough question. Dayne and Barber can't block for one another, so it is difficult to have both on the field at the same time, though the coaches again will look for ways to do that, perhaps by putting one in

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-14	Jeremy Shockey	TE	Miami (Fla.)	Giants wouldn't have traded up for him if they didn't plan to play him.
2-46	Tim Carter	WR	Auburn	Expected to contribute on special teams first, then as a receiver.
3-78	Jeff Hatch	OT	Pennsylvania	Ivy League product has a chance to open season as starting LT.
5-152	Nick Greisen	LB	Wisconsin	Adds depth to thin LB corps and may handle long-snapping duties.
6-188	Westly Mallard	LB	Oregon	Undersized linebacker offers hope for more athletic special teams.
7-226	Daryl Jones	WR	Miami (Fla.)	Another pick to bolster the special teams unit.
7-245	Quincy Monk	LB	North Carolina	His biggest contributions will be, you guessed it, on special teams.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-7	Ike Hilliard	WR	Florida	Starter with Giants
'98-24	Shaun Williams	DB	UCLA	Starter with Giants
'99-19	Luke Petitgout	OT	Notre Dame	Starter with Giants
'00-11	Ron Dayne	RB	Wisconsin	Backup with Giants
'01-22	Will Allen	DB	Syracuse	Starter with Giants

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

The Giants spent most of the offseason losing key players and dealing with negative comments made by star players. And they were unable to fill needs due to their salary-cap situation. On offense, they will be relying on young, unproven players to replace offensive linemen **Lomas Brown**, **Glenn Parker** and **Ron Stone**; fullback **Greg Comella**, and wideout **Joe Jurevicius**. If O-line coach **Jim McNally** can turn **Chris Bober**, **Rich Seubert** and **Jason Whittle** into solid players, then they have hit the jackpot. ... **Jeremy Shockey**, their No. 1 pick, will provide an immediate impact on a passing game that was without a receiving threat from the tight end position last season. Questions still remain at fullback and backup wide receiver and on how to



Dayne

THE GIANTS

get more production out of running back **Ron Dayne**. ... Losing defensive coordinator **John Fox**, one of the better game-day tacticians, will hurt as much, if not more, as losing linebacker **Jessie Armstead** and safety **Sam Gaines**. The defensive line is one of the best in the NFL, but **Michael Strahan's** contract issues and lack of depth have to be big concerns. ... **Dhani Jones** should fill in well for Armstead, but they lack depth behind the starting linebackers. ... If **Jason Sehorn** is healthy and **Will Allen** and **Will Peterson** continue to improve in their second seasons, they will be solid at cornerback. But moving **Shaun Williams** to strong safety leaves a question at free safety. ... Their special teams need to show improvement in the coverage and return units.

motion to keep defenses off-balance. It's a challenge for the coaches because there aren't enough touches to go around.

Job One is getting the ball to Barber, because no one else on offense makes things happen as consistently as he does, both as a rusher and a receiver.

The wild card is Sean Bennett, a fourth-round pick in 1999 who has missed the past two seasons because of injuries.

Greg Comella, a decent receiver but a mediocre blocker, left via free agency, and it appears the starting fullback job will go to undrafted rookie Charles Stackhouse. He won't catch as many passes as Comella did, but Shockey can take some of those. If Stackhouse can reach linebackers before

they reach Dayne or Barber, the team will be happy. **GRADE: A-**

Receivers—Amani Toomer has had three consecutive 70-catch seasons, by far the most productive receiving stretch ever for a Giant. But the team knew it needed more speed at the position and added Tim Carter and Daryl Jones in the second and seventh rounds of the draft, not to mention Shockey.

The key, though, might be Hilliard. The team hopes his skill and competitiveness, plus his status as an impending free agent, help Hilliard keep his edge. Hilliard is not fast but is slippery before and after the catch. He also is willing to go over the middle despite taking a battering on his thin frame.

Despite Toomer's solid production, some coaches and teammates believe he could be even better if he were more intense and paid more attention to detail.

After Toomer and Hilliard, there are wild cards everywhere, and the team hopes someone emerges to genuinely put a scare into defenses. The plan is for Shockey to foil cover 2 defenses by isolating him on a linebacker up the middle while the safeties and corners chase the receivers deep.

For Tim Carter, Jones, Ron Dixon and Jonathan Carter, it will mean simply trying to blow by defenders and making a contribution with the speed the team so badly needs. **GRADE: C**

Line—The Giants took a gamble with aging discards in 2000 and landed in the Super Bowl. They gambled by not adding a draft pick or veteran depth in 2001 and came up empty. Now they are gambling again, this time with three undrafted players penciled in as starters: left tackle Chris Bober, left guard Rich Seubert and right guard Jason Whittle.

Whittle has played enough as a spot starter to inspire cautious optimism among teammates, but no one is certain about what to expect from Seubert and Bober. The good news is all three are athletic and mobile and

don't have much mileage on them.

Mike Rosenthal also will get a shot at left guard and could be the primary backup at both guard spots and right tackle, but he lacks quickness. The team hopes it has another athletic tackle in third-round pick Jeff Hatch, but he faces a huge transition from the Ivy League to the pros. So if Bober can't do the job at left tackle, it is more likely the team will turn to Luke Petitgout to move over from the right side, something it would prefer not to do.

Petitgout might be the only given on the line, considering that talented center Dusty Zeigler underwent leg surgery in the offseason.

The aging left side of Lomas Brown and Glenn Parker struggled last season, especially with run blocking. It was time for new, young faces. But whether these new, young faces are the answer is a very open question. **GRADE: D**

DEFENSE Line—End Kenny Holmes endured a rocky transition last season to a system he never quite seemed to grasp, plus he battled a knee injury. Tackle Keith Hamilton had an injury-marred year. After a great rookie debut as a pass-rush specialist in 2000, tackle Cornelius Griffin had his problems as an every-down player.

That left end Strahan to carry the load, and he did all that he could in a record-breaking 22½-sack season. It was not enough to save this team.

The team hopes each member of Strahan's supporting trio is much better this season. However, there is concern Holmes never will live up to his free-agent billing. If

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Kerry Collins will win over still-skeptical fans—as well as teammates, coaches and team executives—with a strong season and sign a long-term deal that keeps him as the starter for many more years.
2. Michael Strahan will have another good season, but it won't come close to last year's record-setting sack run. The result will be tension and pressure as he seeks to match expectations.
3. The special teams will improve under coach Bruce Read, the unit's third coach in three seasons.
4. The defense will face a difficult transition under new coordinator Johnnie Lynn. It won't be Lynn's fault, however, because this unit had many leaks last year, cut two starters and added little.
5. The debate over how to use both Tiki Barber and Ron Dayne will continue. Bottom line: There is no solution as long as both remain healthy.



Barber

2001 results

Sept. 10	at Denver	L	20-31
Sept. 23	at Kansas City	W	13-3
Sept. 30	NEW ORLEANS	W	21-13
Oct. 7	WASHINGTON	W	23-9
Oct. 14	at St. Louis	L	14-15
Oct. 22	PHILADELPHIA	L	9-10
Oct. 28	at Washington	L	21-35
Nov. 4	DALLAS (OT)	W	27-24
Nov. 11	at Arizona	W	17-10
Nov. 19	at Minnesota	L	16-28
Nov. 25	OAKLAND	L	10-28
Dec. 2	Open date		
Dec. 9	at Dallas	L	13-20
Dec. 15	ARIZONA	W	17-13
Dec. 23	SEATTLE	W	27-24
Dec. 30	at Philadelphia	L	21-24
Jan. 6	GREEN BAY	L	25-34

he does, this is potentially an elite front four.

The biggest problem for the coaches and players on the line is lack of depth, and the lack of a serious rotation at end or tackle. Last season, seventh-round pick Ross Kolodziej and undrafted Lance Legree got time at tackle, plus undrafted Frank Ferrara and fourth-round pick Cedric Scott helped at end. That was not enough to produce a rotation to throw fear into offensive lines. If Scott makes a big leap this season, it will be a big plus, because no line help came out of the draft. **GRADE: B-**

Linebackers—The man in the middle, Mike

Greisen is a gritty tackling machine who makes up for his lack of pure speed with know-how and aggressiveness. Greisen will get a shot at displacing Jones on the weak side but more likely will serve as the primary backup.

The most intriguing newcomer is Wesly Mallard, an undersized linebacker who was drafted mostly for his potential as a special teams ace. But if he shows the coaches something in camp, he could become a specialist in nickel situations. **GRADE: C**

Secondary—This was the strangest, most exasperating unit on the team last season.

The two best players, free safety Shaun Williams and cornerback Jason Sehorn, led a parade of coverage errors that turned the tide in several games. It was shocking, because Williams, Sehorn and veteran strong safety Sam Garnes were being counted on while rookie cornerbacks Will Allen and Will Peterson adjusted to the NFL.

Garnes is gone now, and Williams has been moved to strong safety, his natural position. He should be able to concentrate more on run support and big hits and a bit less on coverage, though there is uncertainty at free safety, where journeyman Omar Stoutmire is the starter for now.

The coaches feel good about the cornerback situation, because Allen and Peterson now have one season of experience and should take a big step up after occasionally being beaten for big plays last year. And Sehorn believes

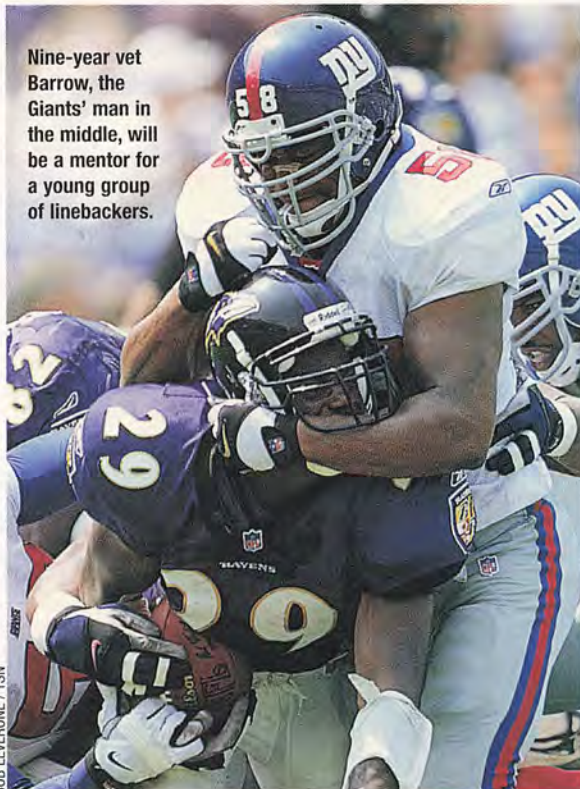
he will be back near 100 percent physically after playing last year on a right knee that had to be drained repeatedly. He underwent surgery to repair a hole in his lower thigh bone, and it appears to have been successful.

If the three corners all play well, Lynn will feel more comfortable blitzing linebackers.

GRADE: B-

SPECIAL TEAMS The organization showed its concern for the awful special teams play of recent years first with a coaching change, then by making several draft picks based partly or mostly on special teams play. That included wide receivers Tim Carter and Daryl Jones, both of whom could emerge as kick returners as rookies, and the speedy Mallard.

There are question marks everywhere, beginning at kicker. Owen Pochman showed a booming leg on kickoffs and field goals in practice as a rookie, but that didn't translate to games. With veteran Morten Andersen



Nine-year vet Barrow, the Giants' man in the middle, will be a mentor for a young group of linebackers.

Moves

Key additions

None

Key losses

K Morten Andersen	Free agent/Chiefs
LB Jessie Armstead	Free agent/Redskins
OT Lomas Brown	Free agent
FB Greg Comella	Free agent/Titans
TE Howard Cross	Retired
SS Sam Garnes	Free agent/Jets
QB Jason Garrett	Free agent
WR Joe Jurevicius	Free agent/Buccaneers
RB Joe Montgomery	Free agent/Panthers
CB Emmanuel McDaniel	Free agent
G Glenn Parker	Free agent
G Ron Stone	Free agent/49ers
CB Dave Thomas	Free agent

Stadium/Media

Giants Stadium (80,242).

Ticket information: 201-935-8222.

Training site: University of Albany, Albany, N.Y.;

201-935-8111.

Radio: WFAN-AM (660).

Website: www.giants.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 7-9 (3rd in NFC East); 4-4 in division; 5-7 in conference; 2-2 vs. AFC; 5-3 at home; 2-6 on road; 0-4 on artificial turf; 7-5 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Jim Fassel's regular-season record: 44-35-1 in five seasons with Giants.

Fassel's postseason record: 2-2 in two appearances with Giants (0-1 in Super Bowl).

Team record last five years: 44-35-1 (.556, ranks 12th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*333.4	4	9
Rushing offense	*111.1	T5	T14
Passing offense	*222.4	5	T8
Scoring offense	294	9	T21
Total defense	*310.9	8	14
Rushing defense	*96.6	3	8
Passing defense	*214.4	10	21
Scoring defense	321	8	T16
Takeaways	28	11	T16
Giveaways	29	9	T17
Turnover differential	-1	9	T16
Sacks	46	4	6
Sacks allowed	36	7	14

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coch	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Jim Fassel	Head coach	12	6
Sean Payton	Offensive coordinator	6	4
Johnnie Lynn	Defensive coordinator	9	6
Dave Brazil	Senior defense analyst	19	11
John Dunn	Strength & conditioning	19	6
Denny Marcin	Defensive line	6	6
Jim McNally	Offensive line	23	4
Tom Olivadotti	Linebackers	18	3
Mike Pope	Tight ends	20	11
Bruce Read	Special teams	4	1
Jay Robertson	Offensive quality control	6	3
Jimmy Robinson	Wide receivers	13	5
Rod Rust	Defensive quality control	17	2
Craig Stoddard	Asst. strength & cond.	6	6
Eric Studesville	Running backs	6	2
DeWayne Walker	Defensive backs	4	1

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REALIGNMENT reality

The only good thing about Arizona leaving the NFC East is that the remaining four teams will suffer an equal blow: None will have the usually hapless Cardinals to kick around anymore. The Giants have swept the Cardinals in five of the last seven seasons, so this is one opponent the Giants will miss having on the schedule twice a year. The Giants do visit Arizona in 2002, marking the 57th consecutive year the teams have met, but this time as a non-division opponent. Winning the NFC East won't be any more difficult than in the past, but the absence of the Cardinals could hurt the four remaining members of the division in any potential race for a wild-card playoff berth. On the bright side, at least the travel burden will be eased. Sure, players liked the Arizona weather and the chance to see friends and family in the West, but they can do without the long annual plane ride.



JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

Sehorn believes he'll be 100 percent in 2002 after playing on an injured knee last season.

gone, the job is Pochman's to lose. He clearly has the talent, but he has to do something with it.

Punter Rodney Williams is another young player with a big leg, but he was inconsistent as a rookie, booming a 90-yarder in the opener but misfiring in crucial situations in later weeks.

Players complained that the previous special teams coach's kick-return schemes were not creative, something that should not be a problem under Read. The coverage units should be bolstered by the addition of team speed in the draft, and Carter and Jones could replace Dixon and Barber on kickoff and punt returns, respectively. **GRADE: D**

BOTTOM LINE Accorsi insists he kept the core of the team together, which is true. But that only goes so far, especially if there are any key injuries. There is no experienced depth, so the draft class had better adapt quickly. The Giants are talented enough to tread water, but not much more, which might leave tough decisions on the futures of Fassel and Collins. **TSN**

Neil Best covers the Giants for Newsday.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ Amani Toomer
□ Ron Dixon
LT □ Chris Bober
□ Jeff Hatch
LG □ Rich Seubert
□ Mike Rosenthal
C ■ Dusty Zeigler
■ Jason Whittle
RG ■ Jason Whittle
□ Rich Seubert
RT ■ Luke Petitgout
□ Mike Rosenthal
TE ■ Jeremy Shockey
□ Dan Campbell
WR ■ Ike Hilliard
□ Tim Carter
QB ■ Kerry Collins
□ Jesse Palmer
RB ● Tiki Barber
■ Ron Dayne
FB □ Charles Stackhouse
□ Sean Bennett

Defense

LE ● Michael Strahan
□ Frank Ferrara
LT ■ Cornelius Griffin
□ Lance Legree
RT ● Keith Hamilton
□ Ross Kolodziej
RE ■ Kenny Holmes
□ Cedric Scott
SLB ■ Brandon Short
□ Quincy Monk
MLB ● Mike Barrow
□ Nick Greisen
WLB □ Dhani Jones
□ Nick Greisen
LCB ■ Will Allen
□ Ralph Brown
RCB ■ Jason Sehorn
■ Will Peterson
SS ■ Shaun Williams
□ Clarence LeBlanc
FS □ Omar Stoutmire
□ DeWayne Patmon

Specialists

K □ Owen Pochman
P ■ Rodney Williams
KR □ Tim Carter
PR ■ Tiki Barber
LS ■ Jason Whittle
● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

GIANTS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
5	Collins, Kerry	6-5/245	12-30-72	8	Penn State	UFA/99	16/16
3	Palmer, Jesse	6-2/219	10-5-78	2	Florida	D4b/01	0/0
Running backs							
21	Barber, Tiki	5-10/200	4-7-75	6	Virginia	D2/97	14/9
44	Bennett, Sean	6-1/230	11-9-75	4	Northwestern	D4/99	0/0
27	Dayne, Ron	5-10/253	3-14-78	3	Wisconsin	D1/00	16/7
	Stackhouse, Charles	6-2/240	4-11-80	R	Mississippi	FA/02	—
29	Washington, Damon	5-11/193	2-20-77	3	Colorado State	FA/00	10/0
Receivers							
89	Campbell, Dan (TE)	6-5/260	4-13-76	4	Texas A&M	D3/99	16/12
85	Carter, Jonathan	5-11/173	3-20-79	2	Troy State	D5/01	2/0
84	Carter, Tim	5-11/190	9-21-79	R	Auburn	D2/02	—
82	Davis, Thabiti	6-2/205	3-24-75	3	Wake Forest	FA/00	16/0
86	Dixon, Ron	6-0/190	5-28-76	3	Lambuth University	D3/00	15/0
88	Hilliard, Ike	5-11/195	4-5-76	6	Florida	D1/97	14/10
87	Jones, Daryl	5-9/175	2-2-79	R	Miami (Fla.)	D7a/02	—
83	Rivers, Marcellus (TE)	6-4/231	10-26-78	2	Oklahoma State	FA/01	16/0
80	Shockey, Jeremy (TE)	6-5/252	8-18-80	R	Miami (Fla.)	D1/02	—
81	Toomer, Amani	6-3/208	9-8-74	7	Michigan	D2/96	16/14
Offensive linemen							
67	Bober, Chris (T)	6-5/305	12-24-76	3	Nebraska-Omaha	FA/00	16/0
76	Hatch, Jeff (T)	6-6/302	9-28-79	R	Pennsylvania	D3/02	—
62	Parker, Glenn (G)	6-5/312	4-22-66	13	Arizona	UFA/00	15/15
77	Petitgout, Luke (T)	6-6/310	6-16-76	4	Notre Dame	D1/99	16/16
78	Rosenthal, Mike (G)	6-7/315	6-10-77	4	Notre Dame	D5/99	7/0
69	Seubert, Rich (T)	6-5/295	3-30-79	2	Western Illinois	FA/01	2/0
66	Whittle, Jason (G)	6-4/305	3-7-75	4	SW Missouri State	FA/98	16/2
52	Zeigler, Dusty (C)	6-5/303	9-27-73	7	Notre Dame	UFA/00	16/16
Defensive linemen							
95	Ferrara, Frank (E)	6-3/270	12-7-75	2	Rhode Island	FA/01	9/0
97	Griffin, Cornelius (T)	6-3/300	12-3-76	3	Alabama	D2/00	16/16
75	Hamilton, Keith (T)	6-6/295	5-25-71	11	Pittsburgh	D4/92	13/13
90	Holmes, Kenny (E)	6-4/270	10-24-73	6	Miami (Fla.)	UFA/01	16/16
	Johnson, Dwight (E)	6-4/285	1-30-77	2	Baylor	FA/02	0/0
99	Kolodziej, Ross (T)	6-2/287	5-11-78	2	Wisconsin	D7/01	9/1
70	Legree, Lance (T)	6-1/285	12-22-77	2	Notre Dame	FA/01	13/2
96	Scott, Cedric (E)	6-5/274	10-19-77	2	Southern Mississippi	D4a/01	9/0
92	Strahan, Michael (E)	6-5/275	11-21-71	10	Texas Southern	D2/93	16/16
Linebackers							
58	Barrow, Mike	6-2/240	4-19-70	10	Miami (Fla.)	FA/00	16/16
54	Greisen, Nick	6-1/242	8-10-79	R	Wisconsin	D5/02	—
55	Jones, Dhani	6-1/240	2-22-78	3	Michigan	D6/00	16/0
59	Lewis, Kevin	6-1/230	10-6-78	3	Duke	FA/00	9/0
51	Mallard, Wesly	6-1/221	11-21-78	R	Oregon	D6/02	—
93	Monk, Quincy	6-3/250	1-30-79	R	North Carolina	D7b/02	—
53	Short, Brandon	6-3/255	7-11-77	3	Penn State	D4/00	16/16
57	White, Clayton	5-11/225	12-2-77	2	North Carolina State	FA/01	16/0
Defensive backs							
25	Allen, Will (CB)	5-10/192	8-5-78	2	Syracuse	D1/01	13/12
22	Brown, Ralph (CB)	5-10/185	9-9-78	3	Nebraska	D5/00	8/0
	LeBlanc, Clarence (S)	6-2/210	3-26-77	2	Louisiana State	FA/01	0/0
28	Patmon, DeWayne (S)	6-0/190	4-25-79	2	Michigan	FA/01	7/0
24	Peterson, Will (CB)	6-0/197	6-15-79	2	Western Illinois	D3/01	16/5
31	Sehorn, Jason (CB)	6-2/215	4-15-71	9	Southern California	D2b/94	13/13
23	Stoutmire, Omar (S)	5-11/198	7-9-74	6	Fresno State	FA/00	16/0
36	Williams, Shaun (S)	6-2/215	10-10-76	5	UCLA	D1/98	16/16
Specialists							
9	Pochman, Owen (K)	6-0/180	8-2-77	2	Brigham Young	W-NE/01	10/0
2	Williams, Rodney (P)	6-0/178	4-25-77	2	Georgia Tech	FA/01	15/0

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Eagles

Confidence—his own
and what he instills
in others—makes
McNabb dangerous.

plays himself. Former quarterbacks coach Brad Childress was promoted to offensive coordinator to replace the retired Rod Dowhower, but Childress will be more involved in game-planning than in play-calling.

In Reid's offense, the quarterback is the key. The Eagles will pass more than they run, and the running backs are used as receivers as often as they are runners. The screen pass and swing pass are important elements of the attack.

The tight end—in the Eagles' case, two-time Pro Bowl player Chad Lewis—also is a major factor.

Defensively, Reid relies on longtime coordinator Jim Johnson to run the show, and he generally gives Johnson carte blanche. Johnson's defense relies on blitzes to generate pressure on the quarterback and force turnovers. The stats the team cares about most are points allowed, turnovers forced and sacks, in that order.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8 at Tennessee	1:00	Nov. 10 INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
Sept. 16 at Wash. (Mon.)	9:00	Nov. 17 ARIZONA	1:00
Sept. 22 DALLAS	1:00	Nov. 25 at S.F. (Mon.)	9:00
Sept. 29 HOUSTON	1:00	Dec. 1 ST. LOUIS	4:15
Oct. 6 at Jacksonville	4:15	Dec. 8 at Seattle	4:05
Oct. 13 Open date		Dec. 15 WASHINGTON	1:00
Oct. 20 TAMPA BAY	1:00	Dec. 21 at Dallas (Sat.)	8:30
Oct. 28 NYG (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 28 at NYG (Sat.)	1:30
Nov. 3 at Chicago	1:00	Strength of schedule: 11th	

The loss of Trotter will affect some of what Johnson will do this season. For instance, on passing downs Barber is expected to move inside and replace Gardner in the nickel defense. In the past, Trotter stayed on the field in the nickel.

How Bishop meshes in the system will be interesting to watch. He's known as a big hitter who plays up in the box. That's what Johnson did with free safety Brian Dawkins a lot last year. This season, Dawkins may be asked to play more center field, which he also does well.

Style—Reid is the boss, and everyone knows it. Last season, he was promoted to vice president of football operations, but he has been in charge from the day he arrived, in January 1999.

In practices, Reid shows he still has some assistant coach in him as a teacher, especially when it comes to the quarterback position. He is a hands-on guy who will spend time with most every position, getting involved with the offensive linemen as well as the special teams.

During games, Reid will gamble more than most. He's anything but conservative in his game plan, and he will run a variety of gimmick plays over the course of the season. Twice in two years he has opened a game with an onside kick.

As a motivator, Reid isn't much of a yellor or screamer unless he has to be. He

BY MARK ECKEL

Last season, the Eagles won their first division title since 1988 and went to the NFC championship game for the first time since 1980.

This season, they want—and their fans expect—more. Anything less than a Super Bowl appearance will not be enough for a city that hasn't won a championship since 1983, when the 76ers won the NBA title, or for a franchise that last won an NFL championship in 1960.

Coach Andy Reid believes his team will be better than the one that lost to St. Louis in last year's NFC title game. This will be Donovan McNabb's fourth season, and his third as a starter. According to Reid, this is the year when a quarterback really starts to show progress in the West Coast offense.

The Eagles didn't add any weapons to McNabb's arsenal, outside of third-round

draft choice Brian Westbrook, a running back from Villanova, but they believe their young group of wide receivers is ready to make a big jump.

Defensively, the team will have three new starters. Barry Gardner replaces Jeremiah Trotter at middle linebacker; former Redskin Shawn Barber, coming back from a torn ACL, replaces Mike Caldwell at weak-side linebacker; and veteran Blaine Bishop replaces Damon Moore at strong safety.

The Eagles hope the maturation of the offense and the subtle changes on defense will be enough for them to defend their NFC East title and overtake the Rams for NFC supremacy.

COACHING Strategies—As a disciple of Mike Holmgren, his former boss in Green Bay, Reid runs a true West Coast offense. Like Holmgren, Reid scripts the first 15 plays of a game and calls all the

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

For them to cut **Jeremiah Trotter** like they did, there must have been some real animosity between him and **Andy Reid**. The defense was so good up the middle with **Corey Simon**, Trotter and **Brian Dawkins**. It really surprised me that they would take a cog out like that. Trotter was kind of the heart and soul of their defense. They lost a force in the middle. If they think they're going to plug **Barry Gardner** in there and they're going to be just fine, well, good luck. ... Teams have figured out that if you can contain **Donovan McNabb** and make him throw the ball, he won't always beat you. It's always one or two plays a game that he makes with his feet that are the difference. Look what happened in the playoff game against the Bears: He beat them with

can get his point across just as easily with a nasty scowl. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—

McNabb once again will be the key to the team's success. When he is on his game and gets just a little help, the Eagles have a good chance to win. But if McNabb is off, the defense had better be real good or the Eagles are in trouble.

Last year, McNabb started slowly but got hot midway through the season and played his best in the playoffs. It's starting to appear that the bigger the game, the better he plays. He carried the team to postseason wins over Tampa Bay and Chicago and almost pulled off an upset of St. Louis in the NFC championship game.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. **Brian Mitchell** will fend off challenges from three rookies to keep his job as return man. And don't be surprised if he wins at least one game with a touchdown return.
2. With **Andy Reid** in charge, the Eagles always will be a pass-first team, but the influence of new coordinator **Brad Childress** will result in a more balanced pass/run ratio.
3. The addition of SS **Blaine Bishop** will allow FS **Brian Dawkins** to play more as a center fielder. That may decrease Dawkins' blitzing but should add to his interception total.
4. At least one preseason or early-season game will be imperiled by the conversion of the Veterans Stadium NeXturf from baseball to football.
5. QB **Donovan McNabb** will be the difference-maker in the end, finding a way to lead the Eagles to the NFC East title.



Mitchell

McNabb's strength isn't necessarily his strong arm or his nimble legs. What makes him so dangerous is his confidence and the confidence he instills in the players around him.

There was speculation the team might bring in a veteran backup this year, as it makes its Super Bowl run. But Reid decided to stay with his own veteran, **Koy Detmer**, and second-year man **A.J. Feeley**.

Detmer, a confident sort himself, might have to win a training camp battle with **Feeley**, who showed flashes during his rookie season. **GRADE: A**

Running backs—The team flirted with free agent **Warrick Dunn** during the offseason, but that ended when Atlanta knocked Warrick over with a \$28 million deal.

Duce Staley, who would have been the odd man out upon Dunn's arrival, may not be the long-term answer at the position given his history of injuries, and second-year man **Correll Buckhalter** suffered a season-ending ACL injury during the team's postdraft minicamp.

Westbrook, the winner of last year's Walter Payton Trophy as the Division I-AA Player of the Year, could see more time than expected if a veteran is not signed to team with **Staley**. Westbrook will be used in a variety of packages, mostly as a receiver out of the backfield, or even flexed out wide, or in the slot. Count on Reid to find ways to use a guy he watched closely in college.

This is not to say that **Staley**, who was not thrilled about the whole Dunn episode, won't get the chance to prove he is healthy enough to be the team's feature back again. In 1999, his last full season, **Staley** carried 325 times for 1,273 yards and caught 41 passes for 294 yards. But he missed the final 11 games of the 2000 season with a rare foot sprain, and missed all or part of four games last season with a shoulder injury.

OUTSIDE



Lewis

VIEW

THE EAGLES

his feet. ... They've got a Pro Bowl tight end in **Chad Lewis**. You cover Lewis in the red zone, you can stop them from scoring touchdowns because he's McNabb's weapon in the red zone. ... It really surprised me that with all the problems at running back with **Duce Staley** and his health that they didn't draft **DeShaun Foster**. And then **(Correll) Buckhalter** gets hurt in minicamp, so I'm sure that they wished that they had (Foster). ... I think the left tackle (**Tra Thomas**) is really good, but I think they overpaid the right tackle (**Jon Runyan**). If he can play you straight up and get his hands on you, he's fine. When they go speed on him, he can't handle it. You get to the corner on Runyan, and he's overextended. He bends at the waist and doesn't move his feet.

Still, **Staley** led the team in rushing (604 yards) and shared the team lead in receptions (63).

Buckhalter's loss will be felt. The Eagles liked the burst he showed when given an opportunity as a rookie last season. He gained 586 yards on 129 carries (a 4.5-yard average).

At fullback, the team was not thrilled with the play of either **Cecil Martin** or **Jamie Reader**, but it did not add anyone through free agency or the

draft. In Martin's defense, a neck/shoulder injury suffered early in the season hampered his ability to block. Reader can block, but he's not much of an offensive threat.

GRADE: C+

Receivers—A young group of receivers came a long way last season, only to let the team down in the NFC title game.

James Thrash, **Todd Pinkston** and first-round draft pick **Freddie Mitchell** combined for just five receptions for 60 yards against St. Louis, including three for 46 yards by Thrash.

If the Eagles are going to take the next step, this group has to get better.

Thrash, in his first year as a No. 1 receiver, caught 63 passes for 833 yards and eight touchdowns. Those are good numbers—for a No. 2 receiver. Twenty-eight wide receivers caught more passes than Thrash last season, and 33 gained more yards.

Pinkston, a second-round pick in 2000, played well early in the season but went through a terrible stretch in which he

2001 results

Sept. 9	ST. LOUIS (OT)	L	17-20
Sept. 23	at Seattle	W	27-3
Sept. 30	DALLAS	W	40-18
Oct. 7	ARIZONA	L	20-21
Oct. 14	Open date		
Oct. 22	at N.Y. Giants	W	10-9
Oct. 28	OAKLAND	L	10-20
Nov. 4	at Arizona	W	21-7
Nov. 11	MINNESOTA	W	48-17
Nov. 18	at Dallas	W	36-3
Nov. 25	WASHINGTON	L	3-13
Nov. 29	at Kansas City	W	23-10
Dec. 9	SAN DIEGO	W	24-14
Dec. 16	at Washington	W	20-6
Dec. 22	at San Francisco	L	3-13
Dec. 30	N.Y. GIANTS	W	24-21
Jan. 6	at Tampa Bay	W	17-13
Jan. 12	TAMPA BAY*	W	31-9
Jan. 19	at Chicago*	W	33-19
Jan. 27	at St. Louis*	L	24-29

*NFC playoff game.

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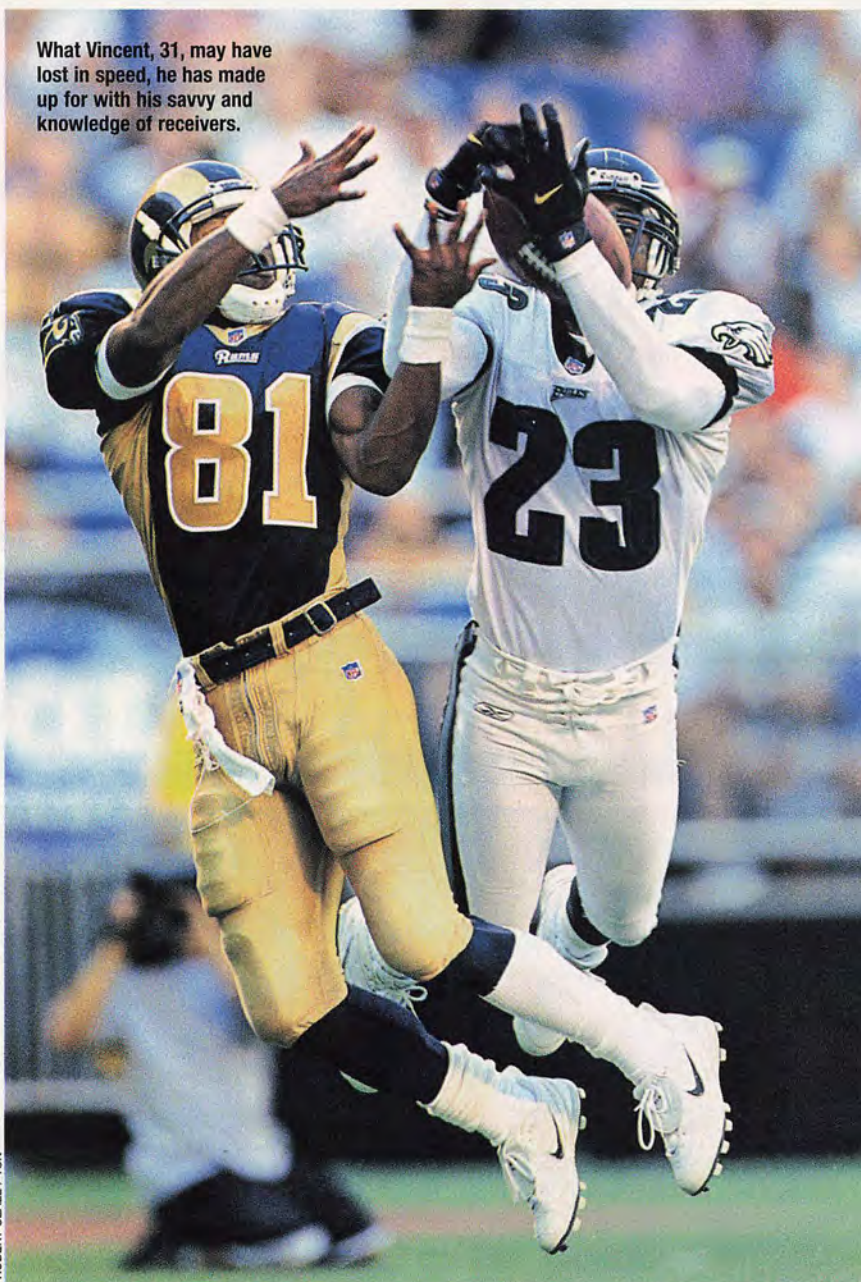
Season previews: As the preseason winds down, what have we learned? We will analyze each team's strengths and weaknesses heading into Week 1 and offer our predictions for the 2002 season.

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The SportingNews.com

What Vincent, 31, may have lost in speed, he has made up for with his savvy and knowledge of receivers.



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-26	Lito Sheppard	DB	Florida	At worst, he'll be the No. 4 CB, and he could be the nickel back.
2-58	Michael Lewis	S	Colorado	Eagles hope he'll first learn under SS Bishop, then replace him.
2-59	Sheldon Brown	DB	South Carolina	Not real big, but is considered a good cover man and run supporter.
3-91	Brian Westbrook	RB	Villanova	Eagles hope he can provide a much-needed home-run threat.
4-124	Scott Peters	C	Arizona State	Four-year college starter is expected to battle Fraley for No. 1 job.
5-162	Freddie Milons	WR	Alabama	Projects more as a slot receiver than an outside threat.
6-198	Tyreo Harrison	LB	Notre Dame	Not fast, but could easily win a roster spot as a backup.
7-238	Raheem Brock	DE	Temple	Philly native faces uphill climb to earn spot with hometown team.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-25	Jon Harris	DE	Virginia	In Raiders camp
'98-11	Tra Thomas	OT	Florida State	Starter with Eagles
'99-2	Donovan McNabb	QB	Syracuse	Starter with Eagles
'00-6	Corey Simon	DT	Florida State	Starter with Eagles
'01-25	Freddie Mitchell	WR	UCLA	Starter with Eagles

caught just 11 passes for 113 yards in a span of six games. He finished with 42 receptions for 586 yards and four touchdowns and seemed to wear down by season's end. Pinkston, whose thin frame always will be a problem, needs to come back bigger and stronger this season.

There is hope that Mitchell will unseat Pinkston in the starting lineup, but he'll have to make strides after a 21-catch, one-touchdown rookie season. Mitchell lacks great size and speed but did show good hands and a penchant for making plays over the middle.

Lewis didn't put up the numbers he did in 2000, but that was more the result of the wide receivers getting better and the return of Staley than a drop-off in his play. Tony Stewart, who showed he could make some plays in the limited time he received as a rookie, could be used in two-tight end sets this season. **GRADE: C**

Line—Reid built his line to pass protect—all five starters were tackles at one time—and for the most part it has provided sufficient time for McNabb to find his receivers.

Left tackle Tra Thomas, a No. 1 pick in 1998, continues to get better every year and had his best season in 2001. He is an exceptional pass blocker who has worked to get better as a run blocker.

Right tackle Jon Runyan, the team's big free-agent signee two years ago, has been as good as advertised. He is solid, but not dominant, as a run blocker. As a pass blocker, he has had his troubles with speed rushers, such as the Giants' Michael Strahan and the Rams' Leonard Little.

Guards Jermaine Mayberry and John Welbourn, both converted tackles, are good pass protectors. Both players are good technicians who rely more on know-how than brute strength to get the job done.

Hank Fraley did a commendable job at center after stepping in when former starter Bubba Miller suffered a season-ending knee injury in last year's final preseason game. But that doesn't guarantee him a job for this season. Fraley, a brawler type, is going to get a training-camp battle from fourth-round draft pick Scott Peters.

GRADE: B-

DEFENSE Line—Surprisingly, the team did not add a big run stuffer either at tackle or at left end to help a run defense that ranked 18th in the league last season. That means Johnson will go to work with basically the same group he had last year and hope improvement against the run comes from the new-look linebackers and in the secondary.

One thing the Eagles do have up front are players who can rush the passer. Right end Hugh Douglas had his second straight Pro Bowl season in 2001, managing 9½ sacks despite constant double-teaming.

What the defense needs is another pass

Tra Thomas has worked hard to improve his run blocking.



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

rusher on the left side to take some of the pressure off Douglas. Starter Brandon Whiting is a solid, intelligent player, but he is not an edge rusher. He is better suited inside as a pass rusher, which he does on third down.

The answer might come from second-year man Derrick Burgess, who had six sacks last year and wasn't as much of a liability against the run as was feared. Burgess, like Douglas, is a bit undersized, making both of them targets for power running games.

The Eagles had some trouble against the run inside as well. Hollis Thomas was bothered by a stress fracture in his foot that hampered his play most of the season, an injury that forced him to miss the playoffs. Corey Simon, the team's No. 1 pick in 2000, has proven to be a good inside pass rusher, with 17 sacks in his first two seasons. But he also could become more efficient against the run.

Paul Grasmanis, the third tackle, is a workmanlike, try-hard guy. The team hopes to get more this season from backup defensive end N.D. Kalu, who notched just three sacks after signing a \$7.2 million free-agent contract in March 2001. **GRADE: B**

Linebackers—Strongside linebacker Carlos Emmons is the only returnee from a solid group that helped the team finish second in the league in points allowed. Emmons, who plays well over the tight end and is equally adept against the run and in coverage, has

not been used on the blitz as much as he was when he played in Pittsburgh's 3-4 defense. Instead, the team values his ability to cover tight ends.

The big story will be how Gardner, a fourth-year player, does in place of Trotter, a two-time Pro Bowl player, in the middle. Gardner, a No. 2 pick in 1999, lost a training-camp battle to Trotter as a rookie and then struggled as a starter on the weak side in his second year. He is a sure tackler but has not shown to be much of a playmaker.

Barber will replace Caldwell, who left as a free agent for Chicago. Barber, who started 30 games for Washington in 1999 and 2000, should be a playmaker if he has recovered from the torn anterior cruciate ligament that forced him to miss most of last season. **GRADE: C+**

Secondary—The strength of the team a year ago got even stronger when the Eagles used their first three picks on defensive backs.

First-round pick Lito Sheppard, a cornerback, and second-round picks Michael Lewis (safety) and Sheldon Brown (corner) join a unit that helped the team finish second in the league in pass defense last year.

Troy Vincent, 31, shows no signs of slowing down. His last three years might have been the best three of his career, and he'll be gunning for his fourth straight Pro Bowl appearance. If he has lost any of his speed, he has more than made up for it with his savvy and knowledge of receivers.

At the other corner, Bobby Taylor is coming off one of his best seasons, and he nearly made it to his first Pro Bowl. Taylor, a seven-year pro, is a solid cover guy who rarely makes mistakes.

Nickel back Al Harris, a physical player who at times can be too physical, will be challenged by Sheppard and Brown for playing time.

Dawkins made it back to the Pro Bowl last year, and deservedly so. Johnson uses him in a variety of ways, including blitzing from every angle to man-to-man coverage of extra receivers. Dawkins is the key to the Eagles' defensive success.

The addition of Bishop, the former Titan, gives the team another big hitter in the secondary. The concern about Bishop, who will be 32 when the season starts, is that he missed most of last year with a broken foot. **GRADE: A**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Eagles had the best special teams in the league last season, and they're counting on rookies—notably Sheppard, Lewis, Brown and Westbrook—to make them even better.

Sheppard, Westbrook and fifth-round pick Freddie Milons will compete for a job as a return man, and they'll get to learn from Brian Mitchell, one of the best in the history of the game. Mitchell, the league's all-time leader in both punt and kickoff return yards, is entering his 13th NFL sea-

Moves

Key additions

LB Shawn Barber
SS Blaine Bishop

Free agent/Redskins
Free agent/Titans

Key losses

LB Mike Caldwell
C Bubba Miller
CB Monty Montgomery
S Damon Moore
G Jim Pyne
OT Ryan Schau
LB Jeremiah Trotter

Free agent/Bears
Free agent/Saints
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent/Colts
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Redskins

Stadium/Media

Veterans Stadium (65,352, artificial).

Ticket information: 215-463-5500.

Training site: Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.; 610-758-6868.

Radio: WYSP-FM (94.1).

Website: www.eaglesnet.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 11-5 (1st in NFC East); 6-2 in division; 8-4 in conference; 3-1 vs. AFC; 4-4 at home; 7-1 on road; 6-4 on artificial turf; 5-1 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Defeated Tampa Bay, 31-9, in NFC wild-card game; defeated Chicago, 33-19, in NFC semifinal game; lost to St. Louis, 29-24, in NFC championship game.

Andy Reid's regular-season record: 27-21 in three seasons with Eagles.

Reid's postseason record: 3-2 in two appearances with Eagles.

Team record last five years: 36-43-1 (.456, ranks 21st in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*307.7	9	17
Rushing offense	*111.1	T5	T14
Passing offense	*196.6	11	20
Scoring offense	343	4	9
Total defense	*293.8	4	7
Rushing defense	*114.8	9	18
Passing defense	*179.0	1	2
Scoring defense	208	2	2
Takeaways	33	8	12
Giveaways	24	T3	T6
Turnover differential	9	5	T7
Sacks	45	T5	T7
Sacks allowed	40	T9	T17

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Andy Reid	Head coach	11	4
Brad Childress	Offensive coordinator	5	4
Jim Johnson	Defensive coordinator	17	4
Tommy Brasher	Defensive line	20	4
Juan Castillo	Offensive line	8	8
Dave Culley	Wide receivers	9	4
Leslie Frazier	Defensive backs	4	4
John Harbaugh	Special teams	5	5
Mike Kelly	Offensive assistant/QC	1	1
Sean McDermott	Defensive assistant/QC	4	2
Tom Melvin	Tight ends	4	4
Ron Rivera	Linebackers	6	4
Pat Shurmur	Quarterbacks	4	4
Steve Spagnuolo	Defensive backs	4	4
Dave Toub	Special teams QC	2	2
Ted Williams	Running backs	8	8
Mike Wolf	Strength & conditioning	11	8

REALIGNMENT reality

The only change in the NFC East is the departure of Arizona. And while the Eagles still will host their long-time rivals this season, they probably are glad to see the Cardinals head to the NFC West. The trip to the desert was always one of the longest of the season for the team, and its success there wasn't so great. The Eagles' are 3-6 in their last nine games at Sun Devil Stadium, including wins the last two years. Eagles ticket manager Leo Carlin isn't going to miss the Cardinals, either. For whatever reason, home games against the Cardinals rarely sold out and, at times, were blacked out locally. While it has been 27 years since the Cardinals last won a division title, they appear to be getting better with a good group of young players. It is possible, assuming that improvement continues, that they could have been a serious challenger to the Eagles in the NFC East.



Simon is a strong inside pass rusher, but he needs to improve his play against the run.

son—and likely his final one as an Eagle. Although he no longer has blazing speed, he still is one of the top return men in the league.

Punter Sean Landeta, the only player on the team with more experience than Mitchell, had the third-best average in the NFC last year, his 17th NFL campaign.

Kicker David Akers has become so good, it's almost scary. He was 26-for-31 on field-goal attempts last season and is 55-for-64 over the last two seasons.

Mike Bartrum, who snaps on both placements and punts, did not have a bad snap all season. **GRADE: A**

BOTTOM LINE The Eagles, despite all their changes, remain one of the top five teams in the NFC and should be able to hold off the much-improved Redskins for the NFC East title. But the loss of Trotter might be too much for the team to make it back to the NFC championship game, let alone get to the Super Bowl. **TSN**

Mark Eckel covers the Eagles for Trenton (N.J.) Times.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ James Thrash □ Na Brown
LT ● Tra Thomas ■ John Welbourn
LG ■ John Welbourn □ Doug Brzezinski
C □ Hank Fraley □ Scott Peters
RG ■ Jermaine Mayberry □ Bobbie Williams
RT ■ Jon Runyan ■ John Welbourn
TE ■ Chad Lewis □ Tony Stewart
WR ■ Freddie Mitchell ■ Todd Pinkston
QB ● Donovan McNabb ■ Koy Detmer
RB ■ Duce Staley ■ Brian Mitchell
FB ■ Cecil Martin □ Jamie Reader

Defense

LE ■ Brandon Whiting ■ Derrick Burgess
LT ■ Hollis Thomas ■ Paul Grasmanis
RT ● Corey Simon □ Darwin Walker
RE ● Hugh Douglas □ N.D. Kalu
SLB ■ Carlos Emmons ■ Ike Reese
MLB ■ Barry Gardner □ Tyreo Harrison
WLB ■ Shawn Barber □ Quinton Caver
LCB ● Troy Vincent ■ Lito Sheppard
RCB ● Bobby Taylor ■ Al Harris
SS ■ Blaine Bishop ■ Michael Lewis
FS ● Brian Dawkins ■ Rashard Cook

Specialists

K ● David Akers
P ● Sean Landeta
KR ● Brian Mitchell
PR ● Brian Mitchell
LS ■ Mike Bartrum
● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

EAGLES ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
10	Detmer, Koy	6-1/195	7-5-73	6	Colorado	D7a/97	16/0
14	Feeley, A.J.	6-3/217	5-16-77	2	Oregon	D5/01	1/0
5	McNabb, Donovan	6-2/226	11-25-76	4	Syracuse	D1/99	16/16
Running backs							
28	Buckhalter, Correll	6-0/222	10-6-78	2	Nebraska	D4/01	15/6
38	Martin, Cecil (FB)	6-0/235	7-8-75	4	Wisconsin	D6a/99	16/15
30	Mitchell, Brian	5-10/221	8-18-68	13	SW Louisiana	FA/00	16/0
34	Reader, Jamie (FB)	6-0/238	5-4-74	2	Akron	W-SIL/99	16/0
25	Smart, Rod	5-11/191	1-9-77	2	Western Kentucky	FA/01	6/0
22	Staley, Duce	5-11/220	2-27-75	6	South Carolina	D3/97	13/10
36	Westbrook, Brian	5-8/200	9-2-79	R	Villanova	D3/02	—
Receivers							
88	Bartrum, Mike (TE)	6-4/245	6-23-70	9	Marshall	FA/00	16/0
85	Brown, Na	6-0/196	2-22-77	4	North Carolina	D4c/99	16/2
82	Douglas, Dameane	6-0/195	3-15-76	4	California	W-Oak/99	16/0
89	Lewis, Chad (TE)	6-6/252	10-5-71	5	Brigham Young	W-SIL/99	15/15
17	Milons, Freddie	5-11/190	6-27-80	R	Alabama	D5/02	—
84	Mitchell, Freddie	5-11/184	11-28-78	2	UCLA	D1/01	15/1
87	Pinkston, Todd	6-2/170	4-23-77	3	Southern Mississippi	D2a/00	15/15
86	Scott, Gari	6-0/191	6-2-78	3	Michigan State	D4/00	3/0
81	Stewart, Tony (TE)	6-5/255	8-9-79	2	Penn State	D5a/01	3/1
83	Thomason, Jeff (TE)	6-5/255	12-30-69	9	Oregon	T-GB/00	14/0
80	Thrash, James	6-0/200	4-28-75	6	Missouri Southern	UFA/01	15/15
Offensive linemen							
74	Brzezinski, Doug (G)	6-4/305	3-11-76	4	Boston College	D3/99	16/1
63	Fraley, Hank (C)	6-2/300	9-21-77	3	Robert Morris	W-Pitt/00	16/15
71	Mayberry, Jermaine (G)	6-4/325	8-29-73	7	Texas A&M-Kingsville	D1/96	16/15
62	Peters, Scott (C)	6-3/300	11-23-78	R	Arizona State	D4/02	—
69	Runyan, Jon (T)	6-7/330	11-27-73	7	Michigan	UFA/00	16/16
72	Thomas, Tra (T)	6-7/349	11-20-74	5	Florida State	D1/98	15/15
76	Welbourn, John	6-5/318	3-30-76	4	California	D4a/99	15/15
66	Williams, Bobbie (G)	6-3/320	9-25-76	3	Arkansas	D2b/00	1/1
Defensive linemen							
61	Brock, Raheem (E)	6-4/257	6-10-78	R	Temple	D7/02	—
59	Burgess, Derrick	6-2/266	8-12-78	2	Mississippi	D3/01	16/4
53	Douglas, Hugh	6-2/280	8-23-71	8	Central State (Ohio)	T-NYJ/98	15/15
96	Grasmanis, Paul (T)	6-3/298	8-2-74	7	Notre Dame	UFA/00	14/2
94	Kalu, N.D. (E)	6-3/265	8-3-75	6	Rice	UFA/00	14/1
90	Simon, Corey (T)	6-2/293	3-2-77	3	Florida State	D1/00	16/16
78	Thomas, Hollis (T)	6-0/306	1-10-74	7	Northern Illinois	FA/96	14/14
97	Walker, Darwin (T)	6-3/294	6-15-77	3	Tennessee	W-Ari/00	10/0
98	Whiting, Brandon (T)	6-3/285	7-30-76	5	California	D4a/98	13/12
Linebackers							
56	Barber, Shawn	6-2/237	1-14-75	5	Richmond	UFA/02	3/3
55	Caver, Quinton	6-4/230	8-22-78	2	Arkansas	D2/01	11/0
51	Emmons, Carlos	6-5/250	9-3-73	7	Arkansas State	UFA/00	16/15
52	Gardner, Barry	6-0/248	12-13-76	4	Northwestern	D2/99	16/0
54	Harrison, Tyreo	6-2/238	5-15-80	R	Notre Dame	D6/02	—
58	Reese, Ike	6-2/222	10-16-73	5	Michigan State	D5/98	16/0
Defensive backs							
24	Bishop, Blaine (S)	5-9/203	7-24-70	10	Ball State	FA/02	5/4
39	Brown, Sheldon (CB)	5-10/196	3-19-79	R	South Carolina	D2b/02	—
42	Cook, Rashard (S)	5-11/197	4-18-77	4	Southern California	W-Chi/99	16/3
29	Crutchfield, Darrel (CB)	6-0/177	3-26-79	2	Clemson	FA/01	4/0
20	Dawkins, Brian (S)	5-11/200	10-13-73	7	Clemson	D2b/96	15/15
41	Hampton, William (CB)	5-10/190	3-7-75	2	Murray State	FA/00	13/0
31	Harris, Al (CB)	6-1/185	12-7-74	5	Texas A&M-Kingsville	W-TB/98	16/2
32	Lewis, Michael (S)	6-1/211	4-29-80	R	Colorado	D2a/02	—
26	Sheppard, Lito (CB)	5-10/194	4-8-81	R	Florida	D1/02	—
21	Taylor, Bobby (CB)	6-3/216	12-28-73	8	Notre Dame	D2a/95	16/14
23	Vincent, Troy (CB)	6-1/200	6-8-71	11	Wisconsin	FA/96	15/15
Specialists							
2	Akers, David (K)	5-10/200	12-9-74	4	Louisville	FA/99	16/0
7	Landeta, Sean (P)	6-0/215	1-6-62	18	Towson State	UFA/99	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: C/G Dwayne Ledford, WR Sean Morey. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.

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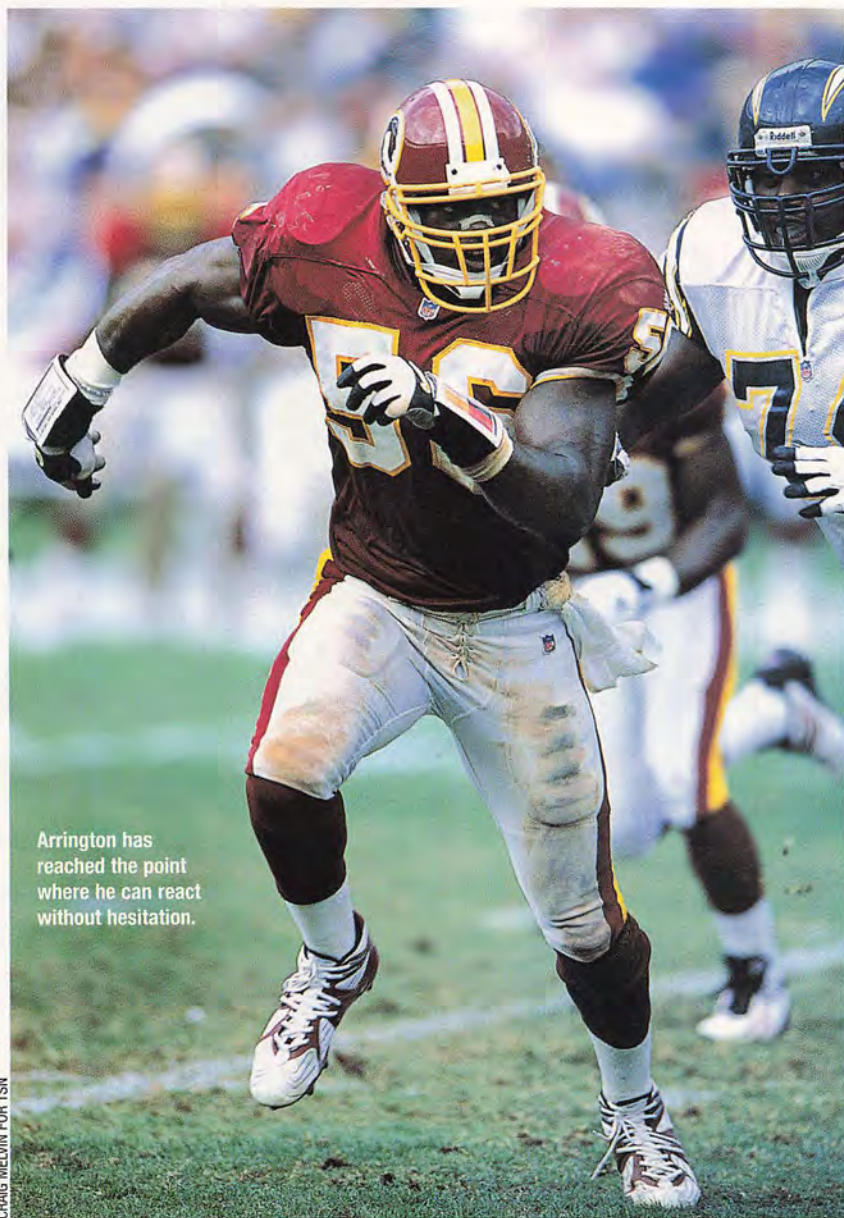
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Redskins



Arrington has reached the point where he can react without hesitation.

CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

BY PAUL WOODY

If change is a good thing, the Redskins are headed for the playoffs and beyond, because constant change is the one constant in their organization.

They have changed coaches again. They have changed the people in the front office. They are changing quarterbacks, wide receivers, the interior of the offensive line and parts of the defensive-line and linebacker units, and they want to change some things in the secondary.

Continuity is not an important word or concept in the Redskins' organization.

Steve Spurrier has arrived with his celebrated Fun N' Gun offense, but despite what anyone says, no one can be certain how Spurrier will fare in the NFL.

His offense virtually was unstoppable in the Southeastern Conference, and he has a national championship to show for it. Whether it will befuddle NFL defensive coordinators and players is another matter. Spurrier came in saying he wanted a strong personnel staff to evaluate talent, and he has permitted Joe Mendes and Vinny Cerrato, both of whom returned to the team after being out of the NFL for a year, to fill that role.

The team has made several solid moves, such as signing offensive lineman Rod Jones and defensive lineman Renaldo Wynn. And if you are going to hire a new defensive coordinator, how could you do any better than Marvin Lewis, who should be a head coach somewhere in the NFL?

The only problem with all of that is there is a certain value to continuity. Successful teams minimize change. The Redskins seem to enjoy maximizing it.

The question for this club is whether using the third different offense and third different defense in three years and changing a host of players again is a formula for success, even with Spurrier as the coach.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	ARIZONA	1:00	Nov. 10	at Jacksonville	4:05
Sept. 16	PHI. (Mon.)	9:00	Nov. 17	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Sept. 22	at San Fran.	4:15	Nov. 24	ST. LOUIS	4:15
Sept. 29	Open date		Nov. 28	at Dal. (Thanks.)	4:05
Oct. 6	at Tennessee	1:00	Dec. 8	N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
Oct. 13	NEW ORLEANS	1:00	Dec. 15	at Philadelphia	1:00
Oct. 20	at Green Bay	4:15	Dec. 22	HOUSTON	1:00
Oct. 27	INDIANAPOLIS	8:30	Dec. 29	DALLAS	1:00
Nov. 3	at Seattle	4:15	Strength of schedule: 9th		

COACHING Strategies—

Spurrier is not just the head coach, he is the offensive coordinator, de facto quarterbacks coach and part-time receivers coach. His offensive expertise was formidable at the college level.

The passing game has proved to be innovative and effective. At times, he will spread the field with three- and four-receiver packages and gun the ball deep. Other times, he'll spread the field and run the ball. Spurrier believes in the running game and will make good use of it.

One thing he will have to overcome is the belief that his system is the most important element. Any system works if it is run by good players. So far, Spurrier has added players—including several who played for him at Florida—with little more than mediocre NFL statistics. Spurrier's belief is that those players have been in the wrong system.

Coaching does create victories in the NFL. But good players create more victories. Spurrier understood that at Florida, where his teams had better players than most of their opponents. He'll have a better handle on NFL talent after a season or two.

Lewis was the best defensive coordinator in the league in 2000. He wasn't bad last season, even if the Ravens didn't get back to the Super Bowl. He has brought an aggressive, attacking mentality, and the defense will reflect that. The Redskins will blitz more

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

They have good personnel at most key positions. The big questions are: How will **Steve Spurrier's** offense and philosophy work, and do they have a quarterback who can succeed at the NFL level? It appears **Shane Matthews**, **Danny Wuerffel** and No. 1 draft pick **Patrick Ramsey** will battle for the starting job, with Matthews most likely opening the season as the starter while Ramsey prepares to be the starter later in the season or next year. ... Adding former Florida players Wuerffel, **Jacquez Green** and **Reidel Anthony**, Spurrier will be relying on players who have not yet been productive in the NFL. ... The strength of the offense is the tackles (**Jon Jansen** and **Chris Samuels**) and running back. But with **Stephen Davis** being a workhorse



THE REDSKINS

back who gets stronger throughout the game, it remains to be seen how he will fit in a more wide-open offense. ... Adding **Larry Moore**, **Rod Jones** and **David Loverne**, they have not upgraded the interior of their line. ... They took a good defense and added **Renaldo Wynn**, **Jeremiah Trotter** and **Jessie Armstead**, and (coordinator) **Marvin Lewis**. The only questions on defense appear to be talent and depth at tackle, and whether **Bruce Smith** and **Darrell Green** can maintain their level of play. ... On paper, it doesn't appear that they will get any immediate contributions out of their draft class unless Ramsey becomes the starter at quarterback. ... They lack a proven, every-down tight end, but this offense does not rely much on the tight end.

often than last season. They will play pressure man-to-man pass defense. They will use their defensive linemen to keep blockers off linebacker LaVar Arrington, so he can pick up where he left off last season. Lewis will use the 4-3 as his base defense, but he also will mix in the 3-4.

Style—Spurrier's style is much different than predecessor Marty Schottenheimer's, though they do share a drive for perfection. Spurrier wants his offense run perfectly. He wants receivers to line up in the exact spot the play calls for, and he wants them to take a precise number of steps in patterns. Spurrier, though, believes in less physical workouts than Schottenheimer, and he'll cut them short if he likes what he's seeing.

Spurrier also has one of the quickest wits in the league. He's not afraid to say what's on his mind, and that attitude carries over to the players. It makes for a loose locker room, which the players like.

But Spurrier has to show he can win to make his strategies and philosophies work. That's the best way to get players on board with your program.

Lewis comes off as a mild-mannered coach, more interested in X's and O's than in macho showmanship. But he has a commanding presence, and his success has given him immediate credibility with his players. He has made it clear that this is his defense and he will call the shots. If that means benching veteran players such as Bruce Smith and Marco Coleman, so be it. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Before Shane Matthews signed in early May, the Redskins' quarterback situation was curious at best, dangerous at worst. Matthews, however, gives the team a somewhat proven NFL starter who is reasonably familiar with

Spurrier's system and Spurrier, which might be just as important.

Matthews should win the starting job. His arm is decent, he understands the position well enough to make the required quick reads, and he should be able to avoid most major mistakes.

Behind him, it's a little dicey. Sage Rosenfels has made a dramatic improvement over last season and has worked diligently to grasp

the offense. He also is big and mobile, has a good enough arm and is capable of improvising when a play breaks down. He seems to fit well in Spurrier's system. But Rosenfels is going to make mistakes until he gets more experience.

Rosenfels will battle Danny Wuerffel for the backup job. Wuerffel has an edge in experience and in his knowledge of Spurrier's scheme, but he hasn't had any meaningful NFL playing time since the 1999 season. Questions remain about his arm

strength.

Patrick Ramsey, the team's first-round pick, perhaps is the quarterback of the future. He has a strong arm, a high IQ, maturity and toughness. But rookie quarterbacks make mistakes. Ramsey might be able to compete for playing time in a year.

Spurrier's system asks a lot of its quarterback, who goes to the line with one play called and several options in case the defense is lined up to stop the first play.

Spurrier's quarterbacks must make a fast decision to get the offense out of a bad play and into a good one.

And yet Spurrier claims his offense is simple to learn. The offense encourages quarterbacks to make decisions, and any quarterback should love that. Actually, it might take two or three

quarterbacks to satisfy Spurrier. He is not afraid to bench a struggling quarterback.

Spurrier has an interesting approach. Many are eager to see whether it works in the NFL. **GRADE: C**

Running backs—Stephen Davis will get 25 or 30 carries in some games and 15 or 16 carries—with five to seven receptions—in others. Davis' importance to the offense will not drop under Spurrier, but he will be used more in the passing game, as will all the running backs.

Davis still will be asked to pound between the tackles, but the plan is to limit the number of defenders who pound on him. Spurrier wants to use multi-receiver sets to spread the field and take defenders out of the box. Davis combines speed and power,

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

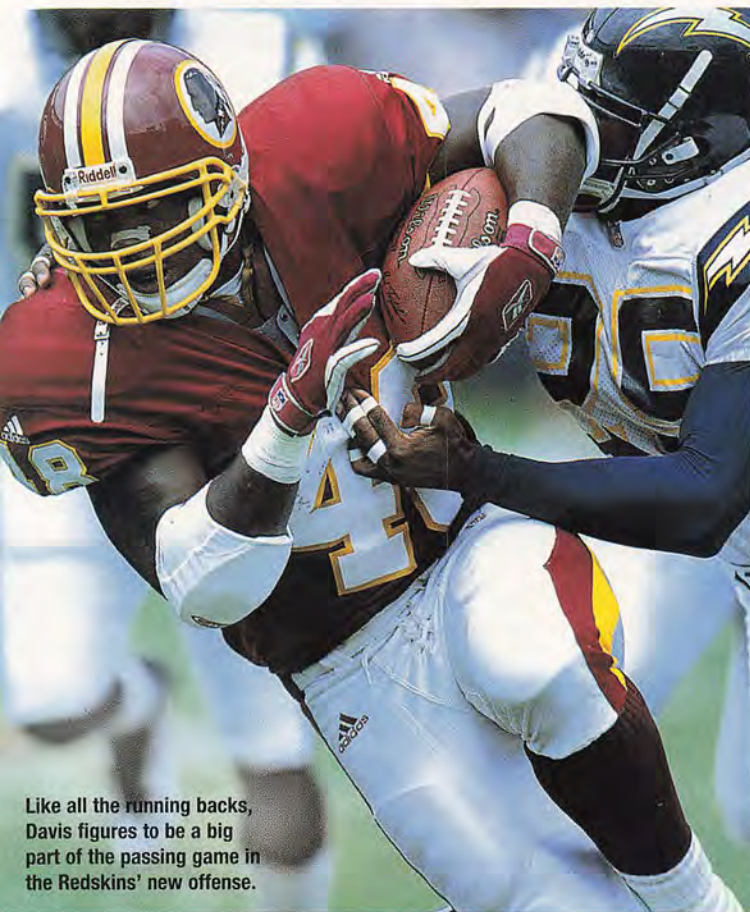
1. A team that lacked offense last season and hired an offensive expert as head coach will rely on its defense to keep it in games.
2. A musical chairs experience awaits the quarterbacks. Steve Spurrier is not afraid to change players at any position. It doesn't mean a quarterback will be benched permanently. It means he'll stand next to Spurrier until he understands what he did wrong.
3. The honeymoon that Spurrier and club owner Dan Snyder are on will end in a spat about who should be the starting quarterback.
4. Marvin Lewis will do such a good job with the defense that he'll be a head coach somewhere else in 2003.
5. Jeremiah Trotter and LaVar Arrington will get in each other's way early before they figure out how to coexist as playmakers.



Trotter

2001 results

Sept. 9	at San Diego	L	3-30
Sept. 24	at Green Bay	L	0-37
Sept. 30	KANSAS CITY	L	13-45
Oct. 7	at N.Y. Giants	L	9-23
Oct. 15	at Dallas	L	7-9
Oct. 21	CAROLINA (OT)	W	17-14
Oct. 28	N.Y. GIANTS	W	35-21
Nov. 4	SEATTLE	W	27-14
Nov. 11	Open date		
Nov. 18	at Denver	W	17-10
Nov. 25	at Philadelphia	W	13-3
Dec. 2	DALLAS	L	14-20
Dec. 9	at Arizona	W	20-10
Dec. 16	PHILADELPHIA	L	6-20
Dec. 23	CHICAGO	L	15-20
Dec. 30	at New Orleans	W	40-10
Jan. 6	ARIZONA	W	20-17



Like all the running backs, Davis figures to be a big part of the passing game in the Redskins' new offense.

CRAG MELVIN FOR TSN

and using him in any other way would be folly.

Ladell Betts seemed a strange choice when the Redskins drafted him in the second round. But if he can spell Davis and serve as a third-down back, he'll be valuable.

Bryan Johnson has made dramatic improvement at fullback, both as a blocker and receiver. He should be a nice fit in the new offense. **GRADE: B+**

Receivers—With Spurrier spreading the field as an aid to the passing and running games, the receiving unit will be most affected by the change in systems.

The question is whether Spurrier has the receivers to make his offense work. The Redskins signed two former Florida wideouts, Jacquez Green and Reidel Anthony, away from the Buccaneers. But Green has only seven touchdown receptions in his career despite being a starter most of the last three years. And Anthony's production declined in each of the last three seasons; he caught 13 passes last season. Rod Gardner, the Redskins' first-round pick last year, had one big game as a rookie and 15 little ones.

Green and Anthony are the quick, darting type of receivers Spurrier prefers. Gardner has good size (6-2, 216) and relies on position and strength to make plays. Look for Gardner and Green to start.

Last year's backups could play bigger roles this year. Derrius Thompson has size, speed

and good hands. He has spent the last three seasons learning to be an NFL wideout, and it's time for him to elevate his performance. If he doesn't, he isn't going to have another season with the Redskins. Darnierien McCants has size, surprising agility and big-play ability.

Thompson and McCants should be able to thrive in Spurrier's system because it emphasizes quick separation and sharp routes. Gardner might be improved this season, but he struggled to get separation at the line last season. If Spurrier's system really does make stars out of adequate receivers, Gardner should become Exhibit A. He needs to step up as the go-to guy.

At tight end,

Walter Rasby has been a very effective blocker but has been used little as a receiver. Zeron Flemister has good hands and can be an effective receiver over the middle. The club hopes tight end Robert Royal, a fifth-round pick, will be effective as a receiver and blocker. **GRADE: C-**

Line—Two of the best tackles in the league lead this group. Chris Samuels and Jon

Jansen are big, strong, quick, agile and durable. They take their leadership roles seriously and lead by example.

Jones was a good offseason pickup. He has bulk and power and should be solid at right guard—and he can serve as the backup at both tackle positions. The Redskins have lacked a true backup tackle the last three seasons.

Elsewhere, there are questions. Larry Moore, a former starting guard with the Colts, was signed to play center. The left guard spot remains an open competition. David Loverne can fill in there but was signed with the idea of being a backup and short-yardage blocker. Three players—Ross Tucker, Alex Sulfsted and David Brandt—show promise but have little or no experience.

Some of the blocking schemes will change. With the quarterbacks making short drops, quick reads and quick throws, the pass blocking will require more quick hitting. The team still will use a power run-blocking attack but not as often as last season. **GRADE: C+**

DEFENSE Line—With the Ravens, Lewis used huge defensive tackles to occupy the blockers and push the pocket so his linebackers were free to make plays. He faces a difficult task in reconstituting that scheme with a Redskins team that is long on age and short on impact players.

Dan Wilkinson is big enough to be one of the tackles in Lewis' scheme, but the team is in need of a running mate. Lewis also doesn't have a premier pass rusher. This group of linemen will need to stunt and loop in order to get pressure on the quarterback.

Age is catching up with Smith, 39. Injuries cost him most of the preseason and all or parts of three regular-season games last year. After finishing with five sacks in 14 starts, Smith will be asked to be a pass-rushing specialist. His playing time will be determined by how willing he is to accept that

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-32	Patrick Ramsey	QB	Tulane	Not real mobile but can make all the throws an NFL QB must make.
2-56	Ladell Betts	RB	Iowa	Should be Davis' backup and could contribute as third-down back.
3-79	Rashad Bauman	CB	Oregon	Has a chance to replace D. Green as team's nickel back in 2003.
3-87	Cliff Russell	WR	Utah	Was a productive receiver in college—when he wasn't injured.
5-159	Andre Lott	S	Tennessee	His coverage ability could win him playing time at safety.
5-160	Robert Royal	TE	Louisiana State	Has good hands and is more than adequate as a blocker.
6-192	Reggie Coleman	OT	Tennessee	Good prospect for future but probably won't play much this year.
7-230	Jeff Grau	TE	UCLA	Listed as a TE, but he's essentially a long snapper.
7-234	Greg Scott	DE	Hampton	His upside will earn him a roster spot if he progresses in camp.
7-257	Rock Cartwright	RB	Kansas State	Has a strong desire to succeed; could help out on special teams.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-17	Kenard Lang	DE	Miami (Fla.)	Starter with Browns
'98	None			
'99-7	Champ Bailey	DB	Georgia	Starter with Redskins
'00-2	LaVar Arrington	LB	Penn State	Starter with Redskins
'00-3	Chris Samuels	OT	Alabama	Starter with Redskins
'01-15	Rod Gardner	WR	Clemson	Starter with Redskins

role. Coleman turns 33 in December, and an elbow injury cost him four games last season. He still plays with great intensity and provides leadership, but his stock has fallen, and he'll have a tough time retaining his starting job if he stays with the club.

Wynn was signed to provide stability. He can play end or tackle but will spend most of his time at end. His game is similar to Coleman's, which means Coleman will play less or will be asked to move to the right side.

Lewis needs to get some production from younger players such as Otis Leverette, Carl Powell and Delbert Cowsette. **GRADE: D**

Linebackers—This should be the strongest

quent opportunities to go after the quarterback. With a line that appears to be limited in its ability to produce pass-rush pressure, the linebackers must make an impact in that area. Lewis likes to pressure passers and isn't afraid to use his linebackers to do it.

GRADE: A

Secondary—Few teams can match the Redskins' cornerback talent. Champ Bailey, who excels in bump-and-run coverage and can stay with any receiver in the league, is an elite player. Fred Smoot, a light but sticky cover guy, developed nicely as a rookie starter last season and should continue to progress this year.

Darrell Green returns for another season as the nickel back. He's no longer a burner, but he uses his experience to his advantage and rarely gets caught out of position. Third-round pick Rashad Bauman is a likely candidate to land the No. 4 cornerback spot. In order for the defense to apply pressure from the linebacker position, it will need excellent man-to-man coverage from the corners. That shouldn't be a problem.

The safeties are another matter. David Terrell is a valuable member of the team but more for his versatility than his play at free safety. The team needs a safety who is a sure tackler and playmaker. Terrell is adequate, but Lewis seems unwilling to settle for adequate.

Strong safety also is an area of concern. Sam Shade is fine in run support but struggles in coverage. The Redskins covered

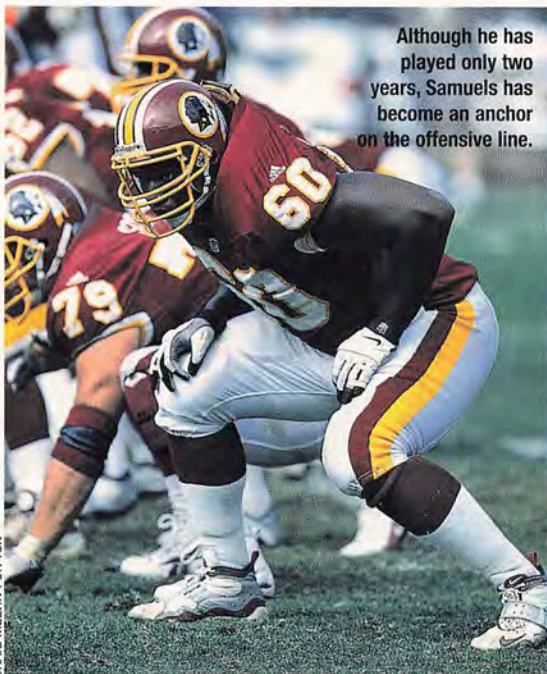
for that limitation last season, but Lewis might not want to make the same sacrifice. Shade is a calming voice in the locker room, and, overall, the team is better with him than without him. If the corners hold up—and there is no reason to think they won't—the Redskins might be able to keep Shade on the field.

Fifth-round pick Andre Lott could take playing time away from Terrell or Shade. But second-year man Ifeanyi Ohalet might surprise everyone by winning one of the safety jobs. He played well last year and is a big hitter and quick learner. **GRADE: B**

SPECIAL TEAMS The core players in these units, which improved as last season progressed, return. The kicking game should be adequate with Brett Conway, who has a strong leg and reasonable accuracy. However, there is no clear-cut proof that he is a pressure kicker and can convert last-second field-goal attempts for victories.

Bryan Barker was an adequate punter last year. The team seems interested in economizing at several special teams spots, and that likely means Barker will be released. Dan

Although he has played only two years, Samuels has become an anchor on the offensive line.



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

unit on defense—and the team. Arrington was a one-man wrecking crew at outside linebacker last season and figures to pick up where he left off. He has the speed to cover and the strength to take on blockers and still make tackles. He understands the pro game well enough now that he can react to what he sees without hesitation.

The Redskins spent millions to bring in Jeremiah Trotter to play the middle and Jessie Armstead so start opposite Arrington on the outside. Trotter made the Pro Bowl the last two years with the Eagles and will be a great asset. He gives the Redskins a run-stuffing force in the middle who is nimble enough to cover backs and tight ends. He will play every down. With Trotter on hand to stop the run and punish receivers who come over the middle, Arrington should be free to go after the quarterback.

Whether an aging Armstead, 31, is a better fit for the defense than a young Shawn Barber—who signed with the Eagles—is less than clear. Armstead certainly isn't going to encounter anything he hasn't seen before.

Arrington and Armstead can expect fre-

Moves

Key additions

WR Reidel Anthony
LB Jessie Armstead
WR Jacques Green
OL Rod Jones
G David Loverne
QB Shane Matthews
G Larry Moore
DT Carl Powell
LB Jeremiah Trotter
QB Danny Wuerffel
DE Renaldo Wynn

Free agent/Buccaneers
Free agent/Giants
Free agent/Buccaneers
Free agent/Rams
Trade/Jets
Free agent/Bears
Free agent/Colts
Free agent/Bears
Free agent/Eagles
Trade/Texans
Free agent/Jaguars

Key losses

TE Stephen Alexander
QB Tony Banks
LB Shawn Barber
KR Michael Bates
G Matt Campbell
RB Ki-Jana Carter
OL Ben Coleman
QB Kent Graham
LB Robert Jones
DE Kenard Lang
S Keith Lyle
C Cory Raymer
G Dave Szott
WR Michael Westbrook

Free agent/Chargers
Free agent
Free agent/Eagles
Free agent/Panthers
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent
Free agent/Texans
Free agent
Free agent/Browns
Free agent/Falcons
Free agent/Chargers
Free agent/Jets
Free agent

Stadium/Media

FedEx Field (86,484, grass).

Ticket information: 301-276-6050.

Training site: Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa.; 703-726-7000.

Radio: WJFK-FM (106.7).

Website: www.redskins.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 8-8 (2nd in NFC East); 4-4 in division; 6-6 in conference; 2-2 vs. AFC; 4-4 at home; 4-4 on road; 2-1 on artificial turf; 6-7 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Steve Spurrier's regular-season record: First season as NFL head coach.

Spurrier's postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 40-39-1 (.506, ranks 17th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*277.2	13	28
Rushing offense	*121.8	4	8
Passing offense	*155.4	14	30
Scoring offense	256	13	28
Total defense	*302.9	5	10
Rushing defense	*116.8	10	20
Passing defense	*186.1	4	6
Scoring defense	303	7	13
Takeaways	34	T5	T9
Giveaways	28	T7	T13
Turnover differential	6	6	T11
Sacks	25	13	29
Sacks allowed	38	8	15

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Steve Spurrier	Head coach	1	1
Marvin Lewis	Asst. HC/Def. coord.	11	1
Noah Brindise	Assistant quarterbacks	1	1
DeChon Burns	Asst. defensive line	1	1
George Catavolos	Defensive backs	18	1
Jim Collins	Assistant special teams	1	1
George Edwards	Linebackers	5	1
John Hastings	Asst. strength & cond.	7	1
Kim Helton	Offensive line	11	1
Lawson Holland	Tight ends	1	1
Ricky Hunley	Defensive line	1	1
John Hunt	Assistant offensive line	1	1
Hue Jackson	Running backs	2	2
Chip Morton	Strength & conditioning	11	1
Kirk Olivadotti	Assistant defensive backs	3	3
Steve Spurrier Jr.	Wide receivers	1	1
Mike Stock	Special teams	13	2

REALIGNMENT reality

The Redskins will feel very little effect from realignment. Their three fiercest rivals, the Cowboys, Giants and Eagles, remain in their division. It does hurt the Redskins somewhat to lose Arizona as a division member. It cuts down on travel, but it also eliminates a team the club had reasonable success against. The Redskins have some major trips this season, but that is more a result of being matched up against the NFC West. Winning the division is going to be difficult. The Eagles are on the ascent, and it will be awhile before that changes. Dallas and Washington are similar teams. Both have impatient owners and major concerns at quarterback. Both are building strong defenses. Given that Dallas has won nine straight against Washington, the Cowboys get the edge in the race for the playoffs. The Giants had a rough offseason and don't look like a threat in the division.



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

Bailey is a premier cornerback who can stay with any receiver in the league.

Frantz, who can punt and kick off, was signed and could take over the punting job.

The return game is in flux. Michael Bates was cut, and Ki-Jana Carter is not likely to be back. That opens up the kickoff return job. Jacquez Green will get a shot, as will Anthony and maybe third-round pick Cliff Russell (4.2 speed in the 40). Green also could end up as the punt returner, a job he handled very well as a rookie with the Bucs in 1998. Bailey would be an exceptional return man, but the team would prefer not to put him at risk.

Eddie Mason is a special teams coverage standout. He also provides leadership and stability to units that need plenty of both. Seventh-round pick Jeff Grau will get every chance to win the long snapper job.

GRADE: B-

BOTTOM LINE The team has high—and seemingly unreasonable—hopes. Spurrier has no NFL coaching experience. He has an unstable situation at quarterback, a retooled offensive line and receivers who have been no better than average. If the team wins, it most likely will be because the defense held up well. The Redskins are a year away from contending for a playoff spot. **TSN**

Paul Woody covers the Redskins for the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Rod Gardner
	■ Kevin Lockett
LT	● Chris Samuels
	■ Rod Jones
LG	■ David Loverne
	□ Alex Sulfsted
C	■ Larry Moore
	■ David Brandt
RG	■ Rod Jones
	□ Ross Tucker
RT	● Jon Jansen
	■ Rod Jones
TE	■ Walter Rasby
	■ Zeron Flemister
WR	■ Jacquez Green
	□ Derrius Thompson
QB	□ Shane Matthews
	□ Sage Rosenfels
RB	● Stephen Davis
	□ Ladell Betts
FB	□ Bryan Johnson
	□ Rock Cartwright

Defense

RE	■ Bruce Smith
	□ Otis Leverette
DT	□ Delbert Cowsette
	□ Sean Powell
DT	■ Dan Wilkinson
	□ Carl Powell
LE	■ Renaldo Wynn
	■ Marco Coleman
OLB	■ LaVar Arrington
	■ Eddie Mason
MLB	● Jeremiah Trotter
	■ Kevin Mitchell
OLB	■ Jessie Armstead
	■ Antonio Pierce
CB	● Fred Smoot
	■ Darrell Green
CB	● Champ Bailey
	■ Darrell Green
SS	■ Sam Shade
	□ Ifeanyi Ohaletete
FS	■ David Terrell
	□ Ifeanyi Ohaletete

Specialists

K	■ Brett Conway
P	□ Dan Frantz
KR	■ Jacquez Green
PR	■ Jacquez Green
LS	□ Jeff Grau
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

REDSKINS ROSTER

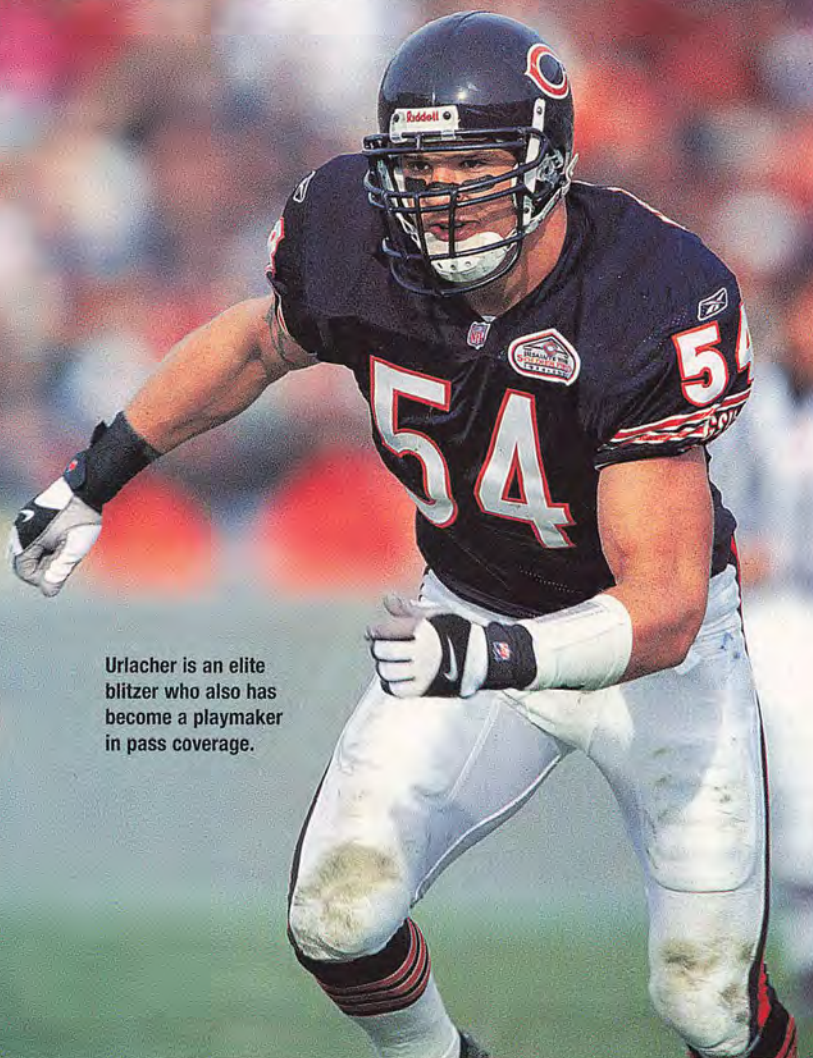
No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
6	Matthews, Shane	6-3/196	6-1-70	9	Florida	FA/02	5/3
11	Ramsey, Patrick	6-2/219	2-14-79	R	Tulane	D1/02	—
18	Rosenfels, Sage	6-4/218	3-6-78	2	Iowa State	D4/01	0/0
7	Wuerffel, Danny	6-1/212	5-27-74	6	Florida	T-Hou/02	1/0
Running backs							
46	Betts, Ladell	5-10/220	8-27-79	R	Iowa	D2/02	—
40	Cartwright, Rock (FB)	5-7/237	12-3-79	R	Kansas State	D7c/02	—
48	Davis, Stephen	6-0/234	3-1-74	7	Auburn	D4/96	16/16
47	Johnson, Bryan (FB)	6-1/234	1-18-78	2	Boise State	FA/00	16/1
Receivers							
84	Anthony, Reidel	5-11/180	10-20-76	6	Florida	FA/02	13/4
89	Flemister, Zeron (TE)	6-4/249	9-8-76	3	Iowa	FA/00	16/1
87	Gardner, Rod	6-2/216	10-26-77	2	Clemson	D1/01	16/16
43	Grau, Jeff (TE)	6-3/245	12-16-79	R	UCLA	D7a/02	—
80	Green, Jacquez	5-10/175	1-15-76	5	Florida	UFA/02	12/10
83	Lockett, Kevin	6-0/187	9-4-74	6	Kansas State	UFA/01	16/0
86	Rasby, Walter (TE)	6-3/256	9-7-72	9	Wake Forest	UFA/01	16/11
45	Royal, Robert (TE)	6-4/253	5-15-79	R	Louisiana State	D5b/02	—
17	Russell, Cliff	5-11/185	2-8-79	R	Utah	D3b/02	—
16	Skaggs, Justin	6-2/200	4-22-79	1	Evangel	FA/01	1/0
88	Thompson, Derrius	6-2/215	7-5-77	3	Baylor	FA/99	16/0
Offensive linemen							
77	Albright, Ethan	6-5/268	5-1-71	8	North Carolina	FA/01	16/0
67	Brandt, David (C)	6-4/309	9-25-77	2	Michigan	FA/01	13/1
79	Coleman, Reggie (T)	6-5/315	10-4-78	R	Tennessee	D6/02	—
76	Jansen, Jon (T)	6-6/311	1-28-76	4	Michigan	D2/99	16/16
61	Jones, Rod (T)	6-5/335	1-11-74	7	Kansas	UFA/02	6/1
66	Loverne, David (G)	6-3/299	5-22-76	4	San Jose State	T-NYJ/02	16/0
52	Moore, Larry (C)	6-2/296	6-1-75	5	Brigham Young	UFA/02	16/11
60	Samuels, Chris (T)	6-5/303	7-28-77	3	Alabama	D1b/00	16/16
68	Tucker, Ross (G)	6-4/305	3-2-79	1	Princeton	FA/01	3/0
Defensive linemen							
99	Coleman, Marco (E)	6-3/270	12-18-69	11	Georgia Tech	UFA/99	12/12
91	Cowsette, Delbert (T)	6-1/288	9-3-77	2	Maryland	FA/00	16/0
93	Leverette, Otis (E)	6-6/275	5-31-78	1	Alabama-Birmingham	W-Mia/01	4/0
71	Powell, Carl (T)	6-2/264	1-4-74	3	Louisville	UFA/02	16/0
96	Scott, Greg (E)	6-4/268	10-2-79	R	Hampton	D7b/02	—
78	Smith, Bruce (E)	6-4/261	6-18-63	18	Virginia Tech	FA/00	14/14
95	Wilkinson, Dan (T)	6-4/325	3-13-73	9	Ohio State	T-Cin/98	16/16
97	Wynn, Renaldo (E)	6-3/280	9-3-74	6	Notre Dame	FA/02	16/16
Linebackers							
98	Armstead, Jessie	6-1/240	10-26-70	10	Miami (Fla.)	FA/02	16/16
56	Arrington, LaVar	6-3/250	6-20-78	3	Penn State	D1a/00	14/14
57	Curry, Dante	6-1/226	7-22-78	1	Morris Brown	FA/01	8/0
53	Mason, Eddie	6-0/236	1-9-72	6	North Carolina	FA/99	15/1
55	Mitchell, Kevin	6-1/254	1-1-71	8	Syracuse	UFA/00	13/13
58	Pierce, Antonio	6-1/232	10-26-78	2	Arizona	FA/01	16/8
54	Trotter, Jeremiah	6-1/261	1-20-77	5	Stephen F. Austin	UFA/02	16/16
Defensive backs							
24	Bailey, Champ (CB)	6-1/188	6-22-78	4	Georgia	D1/99	16/16
35	Bauman, Rashad (CB)	5-8/186	5-7-79	R	Oregon	D3a/02	—
28	Green, Darrell (CB)	5-9/187	2-15-60	20	Texas A&I	D1/83	16/4
25	Greer, Donovan	5-9/178	9-11-74	6	Texas A&M	UFA/01	2/0
34	Lott, Andre (CB)	5-10/194	5-31-79	R	Tennessee	D5a/02	—
26	Ohaletete, Ifeanyi (S)	6-2/217	5-22-79	2	Southern California	FA/01	16/0
22	Servanga, Kato (CB)	6-0/202	7-23-76	4	California	FA/01	11/0
29	Shade, Sam (S)	6-0/205	6-14-73	8	Alabama	UFA/99	16/15
21	Smoot, Fred (CB)	5-11/179	4-17-79	2	Mississippi State	D2/01	14/13
31	Terrell, David (CB)	6-0/188	7-8-75	3	Texas-El Paso	FA/99	16/16
Specialists							
4	Barker, Bryan (P)	6-2/200	6-28-64	13	Santa Clara	UFA/01	16/0
5	Conway, Brett (K)	6-2/207	3-8-75	6	Penn State	UFA/01	16/0

Other free agent veterans invited to camp: QB Dameyune Craig, WR Chris Doering, P/K Dan Frantz, WR Darrien McCants, DT Sean Powell, OT Alex Sulfsted.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free agent acquisition.



Bears



Urlacher is an elite blitzer who also has become a playmaker in pass coverage.

DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

By JOHN MULLIN

Playing with chips on their shoulders because of a perceived lack of respect—from the NFL, opponents, fans and media—the Bears were well-motivated last season throughout a 13-3 turnaround campaign. But when pressed, any of the Bears would admit last year's team benefited from a touch of luck along the way, especially when deflected passes turned into winning touchdown interception returns during overtime in consecutive weeks.

While the Bears were at times fortunate, luck doesn't win 13 games and it would be a mistake to describe last season's NFC Central crown, playoff appearance and first winning division mark since 1991 as a fluke. Teams underestimated Chicago last year and paid for the error in judgement. This year, the Bears are on the road all season because Soldier Field is under construction, so the

team's home games are at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

Running back Anthony Thomas was last season's NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year, and middle linebacker Brian Urlacher won the defensive version of the award the previous season. Both are part of a strong, young core that general manager Jerry Angelo must find a way to keep together. This team is young and fearless with a healthy touch of attitude, and that's what makes it good.

The organization believes it is only a player or two away from challenging for a Super Bowl spot. The Bears lost twice to the Packers last season, though, and must avoid losing any ground while folding new starters into the secondary this year.

COACHING Strategies—Overall, the Bears are a conservative group with an approach of controlled risk that comes from

the personality of coach Dick Jauron. They won't lose games with ill-advised gambles on offense or defense. The Bears are confident in their ability to wear down opponents with consistent execution and exploit mistakes decisively.

Offensive coordinator John Shoop uses a mix of smash-mouth and West Coast schemes, with quarterback Jim Miller fitting his aggressive tendencies nicely into a percentage-minded offense. A major reason for the team's success last season, even after the early loss of wide receiver Marcus Robinson to a knee injury, was Miller's ability to work with inexperienced receivers without forcing the action.

Defensive coordinator Greg Blache is a disciple of the base 4-3. He took a step up as a strategist last season with creative blitz packages to supplement a merely average pass rush, and he did it without sacrificing the run defense, which was the NFL's best.

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	MINNESOTA	1:00	Nov. 10	NEW ENGLAND	4:15
Sept. 15	at Atlanta	1:00	Nov. 18	at St. L. (Mon.)	9:00
Sept. 22	NEW ORLEANS	1:00	Nov. 24	DETROIT	1:00
Sept. 29	at Buffalo	1:00	Dec. 1	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 7	G.B. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 9	at Mia. (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 13	Open date		Dec. 15	N.Y. JETS	1:00
Oct. 20	at Detroit	1:00	Dec. 22	at Carolina	1:00
Oct. 27	at Minnesota	1:00	Dec. 29	TAMPA BAY	8:30
Nov. 3	PHILADELPHIA	1:00	Strength of schedule: T 25th		

The Bears' coverage units on special teams were among the league's best last season. Coach Mike Sweatman got the most out of the special teams by not obsessing about target punting and letting Brad Maynard just kick away.

Style—Jauron is immensely popular with players. His honesty and ability as a former player help him relate to the game at their level. The team plays hard for Jauron and did so even in the lean first two years under him. He is not flamboyant, which is too often mistaken for blandness by outsiders, but his private sessions with the team are blunt, and that adds to his standing in the locker room.

More important, Jauron, Blache and Shoop are highly regarded for their approach to preparation. Blache schemes with an aggressive temperament and gets in players' faces to a fault at times; he will not tolerate anything other than what he considers absolute commitment and willingness to sacrifice one's body for the team.

Shoop's approach is to establish a physical presence first and play off that. He earned respect early when, as interim offensive coordinator in 2000, he made it evident that what was schemed on Wednesday would not be abandoned at the first hint of trouble on Sunday. He is less a gambler than Blache but has an excellent sense of using the entire field to attack a defense. **GRADE: A**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—There might be better quarterbacks in the NFL

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

I think getting **Chris Chandler** was the No. 1 upgrade on offense. If they can protect him and keep him healthy, I think he will help. The guy can still throw the ball, he understands how to read defenses and he can move the chains. They may try to go with (**Jim**) **Miller**, but I personally think Chandler will beat him out. ... Their speed on defense comes from two blitzing linebackers—one from the outside (**Rosevelt Colvin**) and one up the middle (**Brian Urlacher**). If they're going to move **LE Bryan Robinson** inside (in the nickel), they're going to need somebody coming off the edge. I know they drafted **Alex Brown**, but it remains to be seen if he's the guy. ... They kept (**Olin**) **Kreutz**, which kind of solidified the middle of that offensive

OUTSIDE



VIEW

THE BEARS

line. But losing (**Blake**) **Brockermeyer** leaves a question mark at left tackle. You're talking about trying to protect Miller and Chandler, who aren't the most mobile guys. ... Urlacher is a playmaker. He has a physical mentality. He just needs to get a little stronger, especially in his lower body, so he can play a bit more stout at the point of attack. ... If **Mike Brown** goes down, I think their playmaking ability at safety decreases. I think **Mike Green** can replace (**Tony**) **Parrish** at strong safety. I don't think they lost anything there. ... At cornerback, it looks like they're going to go with (**Jerry**) **Azumah** and (**R.W.**) **McQuarters**. It will be interesting to see how those guys fare. They drafted **Roosevelt Williams**. I know they're expecting big things from him. He should at least play in the nickel.

than Jim Miller, but there aren't many who are better for this team and this town, which is why the Bears signed him to a five-year deal in the first few hours of free agency. The team responds to Miller and his unpretentious persona and leadership.

Miller has developed into a solid West Coast quarterback with a sense of progressions and timing routes. He wants to stretch the field, but at 31 he is settling in with a perspective on percentages and picks his spots nicely. Miller does make poor throws—the interception against the Eagles in the playoffs was a disaster and got him injured—but the receivers love his willingness to look for subtle positions of advantage that gives them a chance to make plays.

Miller took 80 percent of the snaps last year and quieted some doubts about his durability. But he missed time with a hip pointer and suffered a separated shoulder after the Eagles' interception, taking him out of the playoff game.

The Bears significantly upgraded their depth with Chris Chandler, who signed on with the understanding that Miller will start. However, Chandler is a 14-year veteran with some big-game experience, having quarterbacked the Falcons into the 1999 Super Bowl. He will be difficult to keep off the field. His durability is a question, but he can energize an offense. Henry Burris is slated for the No. 3 spot but is a project after spending time in Green Bay and Canada.

GRADE: B

Running backs—Thomas was the answer to the offense's prayers last season, a true feature back who takes the ball 25 times per game and gets to the edge even though he is not a speed back. Thomas, who ran for 1,183 rushing yards and seven touchdowns, didn't have a run longer than 46 yards last year but overcame missed time in the preseason with a superb work ethic. He also is an underrated receiver who has excellent hands but needs to polish his route running out of the backfield and improve his pass-blocking skills.

Leon Johnson carried just 20 times last season but scored four touchdowns and is an excellent backup with power behind Thomas. The Bears lack a classic third-down speedster. Rabih Abdullah works mostly on special teams but has the most speed of the backs and is the best option for nickel situations.

The team used a sixth-round pick on Georgia Southern running back Adrian Peterson. He offers fullback power and style in a tailback body (5-10, 214). He needs work as a receiver but is a tough runner who has a shot if he can play some special teams.

Daimon Shelton will miss the first three

games of this season while on the reserve/suspended list. When he returns, the Bears expect Shelton to be their top blocking back. He is a huge hitter at 258 pounds. Veteran fullback Stanley Pritchett is a solid backup without Shelton's pure power but is able to both lead block and pass protect.

GRADE: A

Receivers—Robinson's torn ACL, coming after a 2000 season shortened because of back problems, created a major hole in the offense, and

rookie David Terrell did not play like the eighth overall pick in the 2000 draft. On the plus side, Marty Booker set a team record for catches with 100 (1,071 receiving yards, eight touchdowns). After two modest seasons, Booker gave the offense its only true impact receiver in a passing game that was

a dismal 3-for-55 converting third downs of 10 or more yards. Booker doesn't have field-stretching speed, but he is an all-around factor. He works the slot and is a difficult matchup because of his size (6-0, 209).

Terrell shows flashes of brilliance but struggles mightily with the route-running precision required in the Bears' scheme. The quarterbacks were not confident last season in Terrell's ability to be in the right place at the right time. He must step it up for this offense to become dangerous from any point on the field. Terrell is a playmaker and plays hard but doesn't always have the necessary focus. He is physical and blocks well and is expected to be a starter.

Except for Robinson, Dez White is perhaps the best pure deep threat on the team.

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Baltimore	L	6-17
Sept. 23	MINNESOTA	W	17-10
Sept. 30	Open date		
Oct. 7	at Atlanta	W	31-3
Oct. 14	ARIZONA	W	20-13
Oct. 21	at Cincinnati	W	24-0
Oct. 28	SAN FRAN. (OT)	W	37-31
Nov. 4	CLEVELAND (OT)	W	27-21
Nov. 11	GREEN BAY	L	12-20
Nov. 18	at Tampa Bay	W	27-24
Nov. 25	at Minnesota	W	13-6
Dec. 2	DETROIT	W	13-10
Dec. 9	at Green Bay	L	7-17
Dec. 16	TAMPA BAY	W	27-3
Dec. 23	at Washington	W	20-15
Dec. 30	at Detroit	W	24-0
Jan. 6	JACKSONVILLE	W	33-13
Jan. 19	PHILADELPHIA*	L	19-33

*NFC playoff game.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

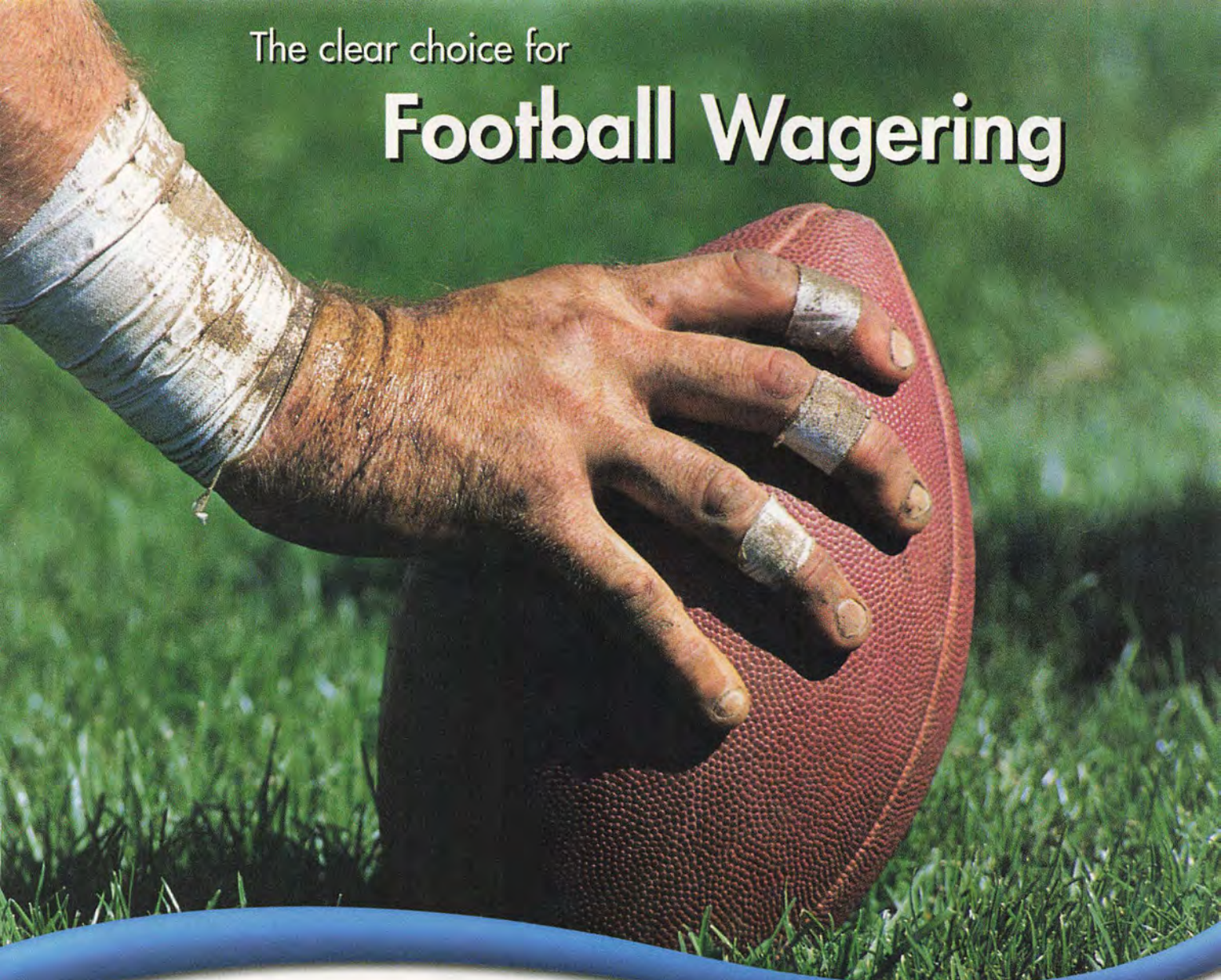
1. The Bears will win the NFC Central. They played well last year with a chip on their shoulders and want to prove that they were not just lucky in 2001.
2. The Bears will rank in the top 12 in yards gained and yards allowed. They were the top team against the run last year and drafted a pass rusher; they return four starting offensive linemen to block for Anthony Thomas and shouldn't have the receiver problems of last year.
3. Thomas will be the first Bear to rush for 1,000 yards in consecutive seasons since Neal Anderson (1988-90).
4. Two Bears linebackers will go to the Pro Bowl. MLB Brian Urlacher is a lock. Roosevelt Colvin's sack total or Warrick Holdman's play all over the field will get recognized.
5. David Terrell will emerge as one of the NFC's dominant receivers. He has the physical tools to overmatch most DBs.



Terrell

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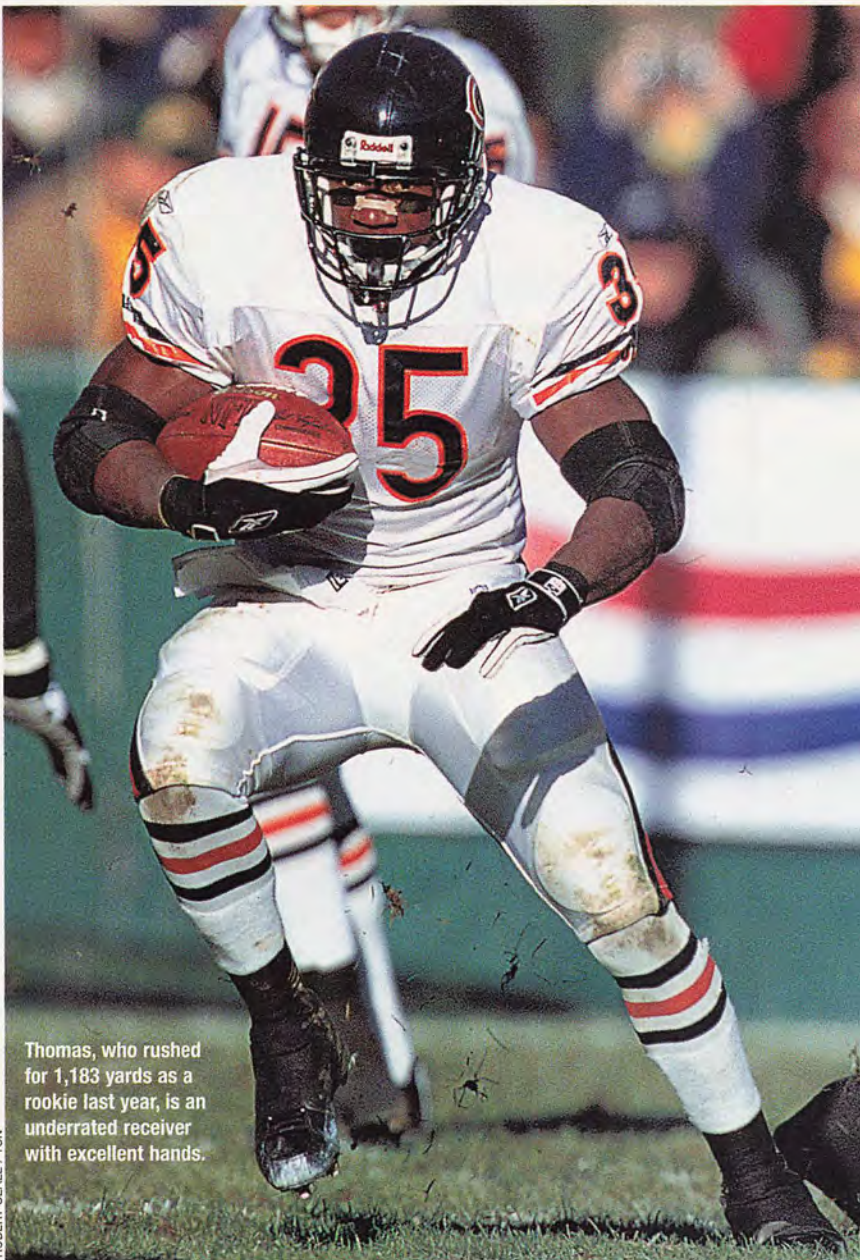


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Thomas, who rushed for 1,183 yards as a rookie last year, is an underrated receiver with excellent hands.

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-29	Marc Colombo	OT	Boston College	Mauler expected to open season as starting left tackle.
3-72	Roosevelt Williams	DB	Tuskegee	Taking a big step up in competition but has a chance to start.
3-93	Terrence Metcalf	OT/G	Mississippi	Built like a guard, but Bears will try him first at tackle.
4-104	Alex Brown	DE	Florida	Could be a steal in fourth round—provided he's willing to work.
5-140	Bobby Gray	S	Louisiana Tech	Plays more like a LB than a S; needs more experience in coverage.
5-165	Bryan Knight	LB	Pittsburgh	Will need to play well on special teams to earn a spot.
6-199	Adrian Peterson	RB	Georgia Southern	Bears think he could win No. 3 RB spot despite lack of speed.
6-203	Jamin Elliott	WR	Delaware	His best chance to make an impact will be as a kick returner.
6-210	Bryan Fletcher	TE	UCLA	A better receiver than a blocker; needs to add weight.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97	None			
'98-5	Curtis Enis	RB	Penn State	Retired
'99-12	Cade McNown	QB	UCLA	Backup with Dolphins
'00-9	Brian Urlacher	LB	New Mexico	Starter with Bears
'01-8	David Terrell	WR	Michigan	Backup with Bears

However, White's difficulty hanging on to the ball cost him the confidence of the coaches and quarterbacks last season. The uncertainty about Robinson's return to complete health is keeping the door open for White.

The tight end is a receiving threat in the better West Coast schemes, but the Bears don't get much from the position. Fred Baxter is a solid blocker and team player with an attitude like a guard and can make tough catches inside the red zone. The Bears need third-year man Dustin Lyman, who has good speed, to take the next step with a breakthrough season. John Davis is in the Baxter mold, good for the run game and an occasional catch. Overall, this position has yet to give the Bears what they desire from it. **GRADE: C+**

Line—With Pro Bowl starters in center Olin Kreutz and right tackle James Williams and a Pro Bowl alternate in left guard Rex Tucker, this is as good a unit as there is in the NFL. Right guard Chris Villarrial is a fourth very physical inside guy who complements Williams nicely on the right side, and the line is the league's best pass-blocking group, with only 17 sacks allowed last year.

The question now is at left tackle after veteran Blake Brockermeyer was released and Boston College tackle Marc Colombo was selected with the team's first-round draft pick. The Bears want Colombo to provide top-level run blocking at the position while working up to Brockermeyer's level in pass protection. Colombo is a physical player who must learn quickly how to deal with quality pass rushers.

Second-year player Bernard Robertson is the team's best reserve. He was set to step into the starting center job if Kreutz didn't re-sign with the Bears. Now, he is working at left tackle and guard. He has excellent quickness and tenacity but is a little short for the outside. Guard Mike Gandy, tackle Damion Cook and versatile rookie Terrence Metcalf provide depth along the line. **GRADE: A**

DEFENSE Line—The addition of jumbo tackles Keith Traylor and Ted Washington last offseason changed the fabric of the team, both in style of line play and professionalism. Both are winners who took leadership roles with a young team and built the confidence levels of its players. Both are two-gap players who are superb at keeping interior blockers off the Bears' speedy linebackers. Alfonso Boone was an unheralded backup who played well consistently last year in training camp and stepped into the No. 3 tackle spot when Robert Newkirk was injured. Jason Wiltz upgrades the depth in standard packages.

Ends Phillip Daniels and Bryan Robinson are attitude players who go all out on every down and are solid in pursuit despite their size. Neither is a speed rusher, but rookie defensive end Alex Brown, a fourth-round bargain, can fill that role. He will get every

chance to be a starter or claim a regular role in the team's rotation. He is expected to start out as a situational rusher and needs to develop into a physical player against the run and put his college reputation for inconsistency behind him.

End Karon Riley disappointed as a rookie and will have to work to keep a roster spot. Joe Tafoya is a solid No. 4 end and was getting on the field regularly late in the season.

GRADE: B+

Linebackers—The strength of the defense is linebackers—Urlacher in the middle with Roosevelt Colvin and Warrick Holdman out-

the entire field. If he can contribute on special teams, he should be the sixth linebacker.

GRADE: A

Secondary—Losing cornerback Walt Harris and strong safety Tony Parrish took a pair of quality veterans out of the defense. The pressure is on cornerback Jerry Azumah, a converted college running back, and Mike Green, who was listed as a free safety last season, to replace the departed starters in this team's defensive backfield. Neither Azumah nor Green was good enough last year to unseat a starter, but the Bears need to avoid falloff from two players who developed into consistent if not always spectacular fixtures in the defense.

Azumah was signed to an extension prior to last season but did not keep improving and ultimately lost his spot as nickel corner to Green. Azumah has the potential to be the team's most physical corner but must get in better control of his footing and prove he can stay with double moves by quality receivers. He will get a challenge from rookie third-round pick Roosevelt Williams, who is raw and not exceptionally fast but has size (5-11, 204) and can return kicks. He is the Bears' biggest corner and gives them a potential matchup with big NFC Central wide-

outs in nickel sets.

R.W. McQuarters is the Bears' No. 1 corner. He is a free spirit and a playmaker. McQuarters plays run support in the style of classic cornerbacks, and was third on the team last year with 89 tackles.

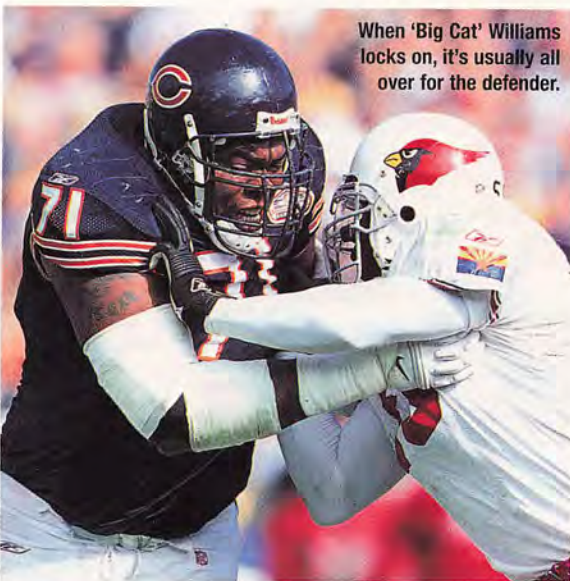
Free safety Mike Brown earned Pro Bowl consideration in his second season by picking off deflected passes in consecutive overtime games and returning them for game-winning touchdowns. Brown is as instinctive a player as the Bears have. He makes few mistakes and plays faster than his clock speed.

Green made the most of opportunities last season, finishing with three sacks and 68 tackles while working mostly as a fifth defensive back. The Bears added depth with Bobby Gray, a fifth-round pick. Gray primarily was an in-the-box safety in college but could be a force on special teams and can develop into part of the dime package as he works on his cover skills. **GRADE: B-**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Bears' best free-agent signing last year was Maynard. Opponents started at the 20-yard line or worse on 44 of his 87 punts, and his consistency was exceptional. His 36 punts inside the 20 were a franchise record.

Kicker Paul Edinger shook off a challenge in camp and became the first Bear since

When 'Big Cat' Williams locks on, it's usually all over for the defender.



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

side. Urlacher was a Pro Bowl starter last season and is developing into one of the top linebackers in the game. He is an exceptional blitzing—he had six sacks last year—and has become a playmaker in pass coverage, too.

Colvin led the Bears with 10½ sacks and moves from strongside linebacker to defensive end in nickel situations. He is underrated as a linebacker because of his quarterback-pursuing skills, but he is a team leader and puts a 250-pound linebacker with speed over tight ends. He has improved exponentially in each of his three seasons.

Holdman had nearly as many tackles as Urlacher and also is an every-down linebacker like Urlacher. Holdman has excellent closing speed and an underrated ability to fill gaps; he had several highlight-film stops on third-and-short last year.

The addition of ex-Eagle Mike Caldwell gives the Bears four starting-grade linebackers and someone who can fill in at both outside positions. Now in his 10th season, Caldwell makes plays and is a big help on special teams. Weakside linebacker Bobbie Howard secured a spot last year but needs to take another step up to keep pace with this quality unit. Rookie fifth-round pick Bryan Knight played primarily defensive end in college, but the Bears like his ability to play

Moves

Key additions

RB Rabin Abdullah
QB Henry Burris
TE Luther Broughton
LB Mike Caldwell
QB Chris Chandler
DT Jason Wiltz

Free agent/Buccaneers
Free agent/Packers
Free agent/Panthers
Free agent/Eagles
Free agent/Falcons
Free agent/Jets

Key losses

RB James Allen
WR D'Wayne Bates
OT Blake Brockermeyer
CB Walt Harris
TE Scott Dragos
OT Jimmy Herndon
LB Greg Jones
QB Shane Matthews
S Tony Parrish
DE Carl Powell
TE Kaseem Sinceno
QB Danny Wuerffel

Free agent/Texans
Free agent/Vikings
Free agent
Free agent/Colts
Free agent/Patriots
Free agent/Texans
Free agent/Texans
Free agent/Redskins
Free agent/49ers
Free agent/Redskins
Free agent/Texans
Expansion draft/Texans

Stadium/Media

Memorial Stadium (Champaign, Ill.; 70,904, artificial).

Ticket information: 847-615-2327.

Training site: Olivet-Nazarene University, Bourbonnais, Ill.; 815-352-3277.

Radio: WBBM-AM (780).

Website: www.chicagobears.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 13-3 (1st in NFC Central); 6-2 in division; 10-2 in conference; 3-1 vs. AFC; 7-1 at home; 6-2 on road; 3-0 on artificial turf; 10-3 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Lost to Philadelphia, 33-19, in NFC wild-card game.

Dick Jauron's regular-season record: 24-24 in three seasons with Bears.

Jauron's postseason record: 0-1 in one appearance with Bears.

Team record last five years: 32-48 (.400, ranks T25th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*293.4	T11	T26
Rushing offense	*108.9	8	17
Passing offense	*184.5	12	24
Scoring offense	338	5	11
Total defense	*311.1	9	15
Rushing defense	*82.1	1	2
Passing defense	*229.1	14	29
Scoring defense	203	1	1
Takeaways	37	3	T5
Giveaways	24	T3	T6
Turnover differential	13	3	4
Sacks	48	3	T4
Sacks allowed	17	1	1

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dick Jauron	Head coach	27	4
John Shoop	Offensive coordinator	8	4
Greg Blache	Defensive coordinator	15	4
Vance Bedford	Defensive backs	4	4
Chuck Bullough	Quality control/defense	4	4
Pete Carmichael Sr.	Offensive assistant	9	2
Charlie Coiner	Quality control/offense	2	2
Pat Flaherty	Tight ends	3	2
Todd Haley	Wide receivers	6	2
Gary Moeller	Linebackers	8	1
Earle Mosley	Running backs	4	4
Rex Norris	Defensive line	12	4
Mike Sweatman	Special teams	19	2
Bob Wylie	Offensive line	12	4

REALIGNMENT reality

The Bears and the other teams remaining from the division formerly known as the NFC Central and now called the NFC North won't miss the Buccaneers, who shifted into the NFC South. The good news for the Bears is that they will host Tampa Bay in a non-division game the last week of this season—and cold weather doesn't do much for Tampa Bay. Matchups against the other NFC South teams are a plus for the Bears, because that division isn't strong. The Bucs departed just as the Bears were beginning to turn around their fortunes against Tampa Bay. After losing six straight to the Bucs, the Bears won the last three. Without the Bucs around, the NFC North should come down to the Bears and Packers. The Bears won the division in 2001 even though Green Bay beat them twice. One of Chicago's top objectives is to figure out a way to get into the Packers' end zone; they totaled 19 points against Green Bay last year.



ROBERT SCALE / TSN

Traylor helped change the fabric of the defense.

1995 to score 100 points. His 26 field goals were marked by consistency—he hit 13 of 15 from inside the 40 and 13 of 16 from the 40 and beyond—and he has made 55 straight PATs. The team wants more depth on kickoffs, so Edinger will face a test from ex-Cowboy John Hilbert.

Returns were a concern all season, and the Bears didn't have a runback longer than 37 yards. They haven't had a kickoff return longer than 38 yards in two seasons. These jobs will be wide open, and look for wide receiver Ahmad Merritt to get a long look, partly because he also can contribute as a receiver. Roosevelt Williams will get the chance to return kickoffs. **GRADE: B**

BOTTOM LINE The Bears may not get all the favorable bounces they received last season, but they probably don't need them. They are not the most flamboyant group in the NFL, but they are extremely well coached, believe in themselves and do not have glaring weaknesses that will expose them to disaster. Last season's playoff loss to Philadelphia was a wakeup call that this team needs to be better and more physical, two things it is capable of doing. **TSN**

John Mullin covers the Bears for the Chicago Tribune.

Projected depth chart

Offense

- WR** ● Marty Booker
□ Ahmad Merritt
LT ■ Marc Colombo
□ Damion Cook
LG ■ Rex Tucker
■ Bernard Robertson

- C** ● Olin Kreutz
■ Bernard Robertson

- RG** ■ Chris Villarrial
□ Mike Gandy

- RT** ● James Williams
■ Terrence Metcalf

- TE** ■ Fred Baxter
□ John Davis

- WR** ■ Dez White
■ David Terrell

- QB** ■ Jim Miller
■ Chris Chandler

- RB** ● Anthony Thomas
■ Leon Johnson

- FB** ■ Daimon Shelton
■ Stanley Pritchett

Defense

- LE** ■ Bryan Robinson
■ Phillip Daniels

- LT** ● Ted Washington
■ Alfonso Boone

- RT** ■ Keith Traylor
■ Jason Wiltz

- RE** ■ Phillip Daniels
■ Alex Brown

- SLB** ● Roosevelt Colvin
■ Mike Caldwell

- MLB** ● Brian Urlacher
■ Roosevelt Colvin

- WLB** ● Warrick Holdman
■ Bryan Knight

- LCB** □ Jerry Azumah
□ Todd McCollin

- RCB** ■ R.W. McQuarters
■ Roosevelt Williams

- SS** ■ Mike Green
■ Bobby Gray

- FS** ● Mike Brown
■ Larry Whigham

Specialists

- K** ■ Paul Edinger
P ● Brad Maynard
KR ■ Roosevelt Williams
PR □ Ahmad Merritt
LS ● Pat Mannelly
● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

BEARS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
12	Chandler, Chris	6-4/228	10-12-65	15	Washington	FA/02	14/14
15	Miller, Jim	6-2/221	2-9-71	9	Michigan State	FA/98	14/13

Running backs

27	Abdullah, Rabi	6-0/227	4-27-75	5	Lehigh	UFA/02	16/0
32	Johnson, Leon	6-0/216	7-13-74	5	North Carolina	FA/01	12/0
44	Leach, Mike (FB)	6-2/240	10-18-76	3	William & Mary	FA/00	4/0
29	Peterson, Adrian	5-10/214	7-1-79	R	Georgia Southern	D6a/02	—
36	Pritchett, Stanley (FB)	6-2/242	12-22-73	7	South Carolina	FA/01	7/0
31	Shelton, Daimon (FB)	6-0/258	9-15-72	6	Cal State Sacramento	UFA/01	16/10
35	Thomas, Anthony	6-2/227	11-11-77	2	Michigan	D2/01	14/10

Receivers

84	Baxter, Fred (TE)	6-3/252	6-14-71	10	Auburn	FA/01	14/14
86	Booker, Marty	6-0/209	7-31-76	4	NE Louisiana	D3c/99	16/16
85	Broughton, Luther (TE)	6-0/248	11-30-74	6	Furman	UFA/02	15/0
82	Davis, John (TE)	6-4/264	5-14-73	6	Emporia (Kan.) State	FA/01	16/6
87	Elliott, Jamin	6-0/181	10-5-79	R	Delaware	D6b/02	—
49	Fletcher, Bryan (TE)	6-5/235	3-23-79	R	UCLA	D6c/02	—
89	Lyman, Dustin (TE)	6-4/249	8-5-76	3	Wake Forest	D3b/00	4/0
81	Merritt, Ahmad	5-10/193	2-5-77	2	Wisconsin	FA/00	2/0
88	Robinson, Marcus	6-3/213	2-27-75	6	South Carolina	D4b/97	5/4
83	Terrell, David	6-3/215	3-13-79	2	Michigan	D1/01	16/6
80	White, Dez	6-1/215	8-23-79	3	Georgia Tech	D3a/00	14/6

Offensive linemen

75	Colombo, Marc (T)	6-7/313	10-8-78	R	Boston College	D1/02	—
73	Dogins, Kevin (C)	6-1/305	12-7-72	6	Texas A&M-Kingsville	UFA/01	15/0
69	Gandy, Mike (G)	6-4/304	1-3-79	2	Notre Dame	D3/01	—
57	Kreutz, Olin (C)	6-2/290	6-9-77	5	Washington	D3/98	16/16
65	Mannelly, Patrick (T)	6-5/269	4-18-75	5	Duke	D6b/98	15/0
60	Metcalf, Terrence (T)	6-3/318	1-28-78	R	Mississippi	D3b/02	—
74	Robertson, Bernard (T)	6-3/308	6-9-79	2	Tulane	D5/01	—
64	Tucker, Rex (G)	6-5/315	12-20-76	4	Texas A&M	D3a/99	16/16
58	Villarrial, Chris (G)	6-3/309	6-9-73	7	Indiana Univ. (Pa.)	D5/96	16/16
71	Williams, James (T)	6-7/325	3-29-68	12	Cheyney (Pa.) State	FA/91	16/16

Defensive linemen

70	Boone, Alfonso (T)	6-4/325	1-11-76	2	Central State (O)	FA/00	11/0
96	Brown, Alex (E)	6-3/260	6-4-79	R	Florida	D4/02	—
93	Daniels, Phillip (E)	6-5/284	3-4-73	7	Georgia	UFA/00	16/16
91	Riley, Karon (E)	6-2/264	8-23-78	2	Minnesota	D4/01	5/0
98	Robinson, Bryan (E)	6-4/283	6-22-74	6	Fresno State	W-SIL/98	16/16
99	Tafoya, Joseph (E)	6-4/270	9-6-77	2	Arizona	FA/01	5/0
94	Traylor, Keith (T)	6-2/330	9-3-69	11	Central Oklahoma	FA/01	16/15
92	Washington, Ted (T)	6-5/355	4-13-68	12	Louisville	FA/01	16/16

Linebackers

55	Caldwell, Mike	6-2/237	8-31-71	10	Middle Tennessee St.	UFA/02	16/16
59	Colvin, Rosevelt	6-3/242	9-5-77	4	Purdue	D4b/99	16/13
53	Holdman, Warrick	6-1/230	11-22-75	4	Texas A&M	D4a/99	16/15
52	Howard, Bobbie	5-10/230	6-14-77	2	Notre Dame	FA/00	16/0
97	Johnson, Tim	6-0/236	2-7-78	1	Youngstown State	FA/01	1/0
63	Knight, Bryan	6-2/240	1-22-79	R	Pittsburgh	D5b/02	—
54	Urlacher, Brian	6-4/251	5-25-78	3	New Mexico	D1/00	16/16

Defensive backs

24	Austin, Reggie (CB)	5-9/178	1-21-77	2	Wake Forest	D4/00	9/0
23	Azumah, Jerry (CB)	5-10/189	9-1-77	4	New Hampshire	D5c/99	16/5
30	Brown, Mike (S)	5-10/203	2-13-78	3	Nebraska	D2a/99	16/16
25	Gray, Bobby (S)	6-0/209	4-30-78	R	Louisiana Tech	D5a/02	—
43	Green, Mike (S)	6-0/185	12-6-76	3	Louisiana-Lafayette	D7b/00	16/2
26	McMillon, Todd (CB)	5-11/182	9-26-73	3	Northern Arizona	FA/00	8/0
21	McQuarters, R.W. (CB)	5-10/198	12-21-76	5	Oklahoma State	T-SF/00	16/16
22	Merrill, Than (S)	6-2/212	12-12-77	2	Yale	W-TB/01	15/0
33	Whigham, Larry (S)	6-2/221	6-23-72	9	Northeast Louisiana	FA/01	14/0
20	Williams, Rosevelt (CB)	5-11/204	9-10-78	R	Tuskegee	D3a/02	—

Specialists

2	Edinger, Paul (K)	5-8/163	1-17-78	3	Michigan State	D6b/00	16/0
8	Hilbert, Jon (K)	6-2/220	7-15-75	2	Louisville	FA/02	8/0
4	Maynard, Brad (P)	6-1/182	2-9-74	6	Ball State	UFA/01	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: LT Damion Cook, FB Charles Kirby, DT/DE Jason Wiltz. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.

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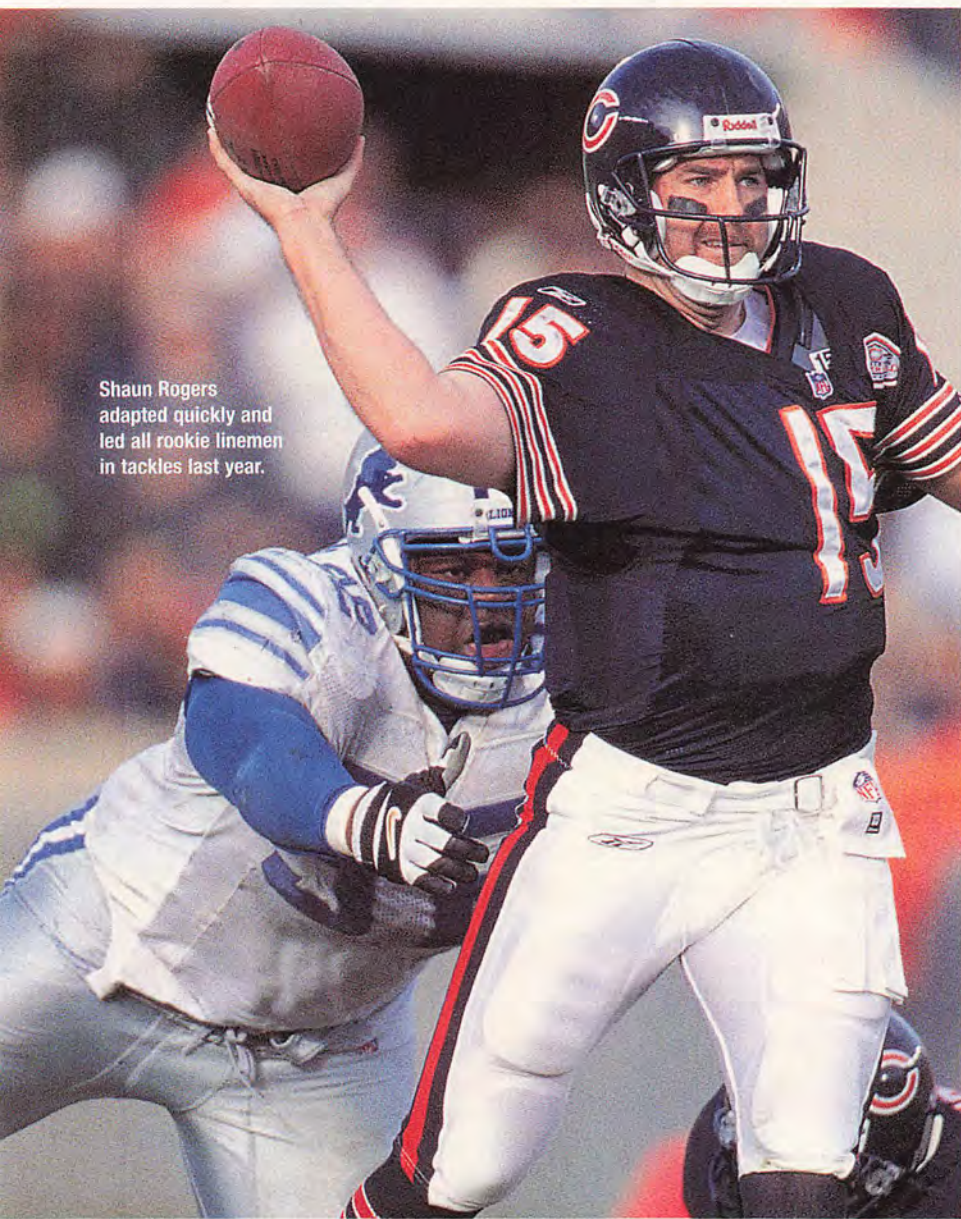
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Lions

Shaun Rogers adapted quickly and led all rookie linemen in tackles last year.



BY TOM KOWALSKI

The upcoming season for the Lions will resemble a celebrity boxing match: It isn't likely to be an artistic success, but it will be interesting to watch.

Detroit's failure to land key free agents and the drafting of quarterback Joey Harrington in the first round all but assure the Lions of another losing season. Although they have put themselves in decent shape for the future, they haven't made enough solid moves to help them immediately. The two greatest weakness in last year's 2-14 season were team speed and pass defense. The club

has made slight upgrades in speed, but the secondary remains in shambles. Offensively, there are even bigger questions at quarterback, where incumbent Mike McMahon is a second-year player with only three starts under his belt.

By drafting Harrington, the Lions believe they're in a great position for the next couple of years because they have two highly talented young quarterbacks. But talent doesn't always translate into success, and the team's QB history isn't impressive: The Lions have had just one Pro Bowl quarterback (Greg Landry, 1972) in the last 45

years. It's not a coincidence that Detroit has had just one playoffs win (1991) in the same span.

The Lions aren't going to do much this season, but the future of the franchise is anchored in the hope that the competition between McMahon and Harrington holds a little more substance than a fight between Danny Bonaduce and Barry Williams.

COACHING Strategies—Coach Marty Mornhinweg, despite having a couple of young quarterbacks, will continue to broaden his West Coast offense, building on the foundation he established last season. With McMahon and Harrington fighting for the starting job, Mornhinweg will have one offense, but two different plans for attack. The process throughout minicamp, the off-season workouts and the early part of training camp will be to find the plays that each quarterback executes the best.

2002 schedule

Sept. 8	at Miami	1:00	Nov. 10	at Green Bay	1:00
Sept. 15	at Carolina	1:00	Nov. 17	N.Y. JETS	4:15
Sept. 22	GREEN BAY	4:15	Nov. 24	at Chicago	1:00
Sept. 29	NEW ORLEANS	1:00	Nov. 28	N.E. (Thanks.)	12:30
Oct. 6	Open date		Dec. 8	at Arizona	4:05
Oct. 13	at Minnesota	1:00	Dec. 15	TAMPA BAY	1:00
Oct. 20	CHICAGO	1:00	Dec. 22	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 27	at Buffalo	1:00	Dec. 29	MINNESOTA	1:00
Nov. 3	DALLAS	1:00	Strength of schedule: 12th		

New defensive coordinator Kurt Schottenheimer wants to improve two areas: tackling and aggressiveness. He will stress drills and techniques aimed at getting players to wrap up and secure the tackle. Improving the team's aggressiveness will prove more difficult. That area wasn't a strength last year, mostly because the team didn't have the type of talent that allowed it to take chances on a big play. As the injuries mounted, the options for former coordinator Vince Tobin dwindled significantly.

Schottenheimer likes his cornerbacks to play bump-and-run, but it's going to be well into training camp before he fully can evaluate his talent and see how aggressive he can be with his system.

Style—After a full season of handling nearly every offensive responsibility, from the installation of plays in training camp to calling every play during the game, Mornhinweg is beginning to throttle back. Just how much he will delegate is unclear. Maurice Carthon was promoted to offensive coordinator in the offseason, and he handles the majority of the administrative duties.

But Mornhinweg will continue to be a hands-on coach. He still will play the leading role in putting together the game plan and will call all the plays—a responsibility he isn't likely to relinquish for several years. By giving Carthon and special assistant Sherman Lewis more responsibility, though, Mornhinweg said he's at least to the point where he can miss an offensive meeting and

DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

I think the Lions are still in transition, trying to find the right players to fit the West Coast offense they're trying to run. How long of a window you get, I'm not sure. But, somehow, they've got to inject a little bit of new blood and come out of the gate smokin'. ... I think the jury is still out as to what type of talent **Mike McMahon** really is since he started only three games last year. His natural athleticism is what you like the most. Like any quarterback going into his second year, there are a lot of mistakes he makes with reads and footwork and just the nuances of the game. ... They have to replace their defensive leader, (middle linebacker) **Stephen Boyd**. To me, losing Boyd in essence was as big as when they lost (**Chris Spielman**) a few

OUTSIDE



McMahon

DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

VIEW

THE LIONS

years ago. He never left the field. Just his presence alone was a stabilizing influence. ... At wide receiver, they're counting on **Germane Crowell**, but he hasn't been totally healthy in two years. They lost **Johnny Morton** and added **Az Hakim**. I think you're talking about two different guys. Morton can make plays in all situations because he's a bigger-body guy. Hakim is a smaller, quicker guy who, in my opinion, is better when you use him in situations than if he's out there all the time. Because the more hits he takes, the more vulnerable he is. ... There are a lot of questions that have to be answered in the secondary. **Todd Lyght** is the only guy they know for sure is going to be healthy. They signed **Corey Harris** in free agency, so he gives them a little bit of stability.

not feel guilty about it.

Even if he cuts back some of his time with the offense, Mornhinweg won't necessarily use that time with the defense or special teams. First, he believed he was stretching himself too thin as it was and, second, he has great confidence in Schottenheimer and special teams coach Chuck Priefer. Although Mornhinweg might micromanage every aspect of the offense, he has more of a hands-off policy with the other units. But he still is involved and has the final say in every facet of the team. **GRADE: C**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—

Mornhinweg is convinced that McMahon has the ability to be a winning quarterback in the NFL, but he's not as certain about his

durability. McMahon showed flashes last year but, in just his third start, he suffered a broken foot and missed the final two games. McMahon will go into training camp as the starter because he has the advantage of one year's training in the West Coast offense, but Harrington's superior skills soon will overcome that.

Harrington doesn't have a cannon. But he doesn't have any glaring weaknesses, either, and his consistency is the one factor that has been missing from Lions quarterbacks for years.

McMahon is destined to lose the starting job during the season because he's not going to be perfect and, with all of Detroit's other woes, the team is going to struggle. Plus, the anticipation of what Harrington can do will build. The only way McMahon can keep Harrington on the sideline is to win, and it doesn't look as if he has enough help to do that.

Ty Detmer will be No. 2 entering camp, but he's likely to slide to No. 3 as soon as Harrington learns the offense. If one of the young guys gets hurt, Detroit's best chance to win still will rest with the other young guy. If he's needed, Detmer has the experience to settle things down and keep the offense out of major trouble. **GRADE: D**

Running backs—James Stewart returns as the feature back, despite the fact the Lions spent the offseason trying to replace him. Stewart is coming off his best season, but he lacks the explosiveness and game-breaking ability Mornhinweg is looking for. In two years with the Lions, Stewart's longest run is 38 yards. Detroit was in hot pursuit of free agent Warrick Dunn, who went to Atlanta, and strongly considered drafting Miami's Clinton Portis in the second round. The Lions will stick with Stewart, but only until they can find a replacement who is faster and less expensive.

Lamont Warren is a solid backup. He runs and catches well and has proved to be

dependable. Rookie Luke Staley, a seventh-round pick, will get a chance to win the job of third-down back. A good deal of success there could get him more playing time. Despite Warren's many injuries in college, the Lions believe he has the ability to be a feature back.

Fullback Cory Schlesinger is coming off a Pro Bowl-type season in which he showed some receiving and running skills to go along with his pounding blocking style. Schlesinger could provide some help on offense if the team doesn't find a quality starter at tight end. In some passing packages, Schlesinger could pick up some of the blocking responsibilities while providing a pass-catching threat. **GRADE: B**

Receivers—

Question marks abound at this position. Although there is evidence it'll be a strong group, there are hints that big trouble is lurking. Detroit dumped its best receiver over the last five years, Johnnie Morton, and brought in Az-Zahir Hakim and Bill Schroeder. Detroit also re-signed Germane Crowell. Hakim and Schroeder improve overall team speed, but Hakim has a history of fumbling, and there are whispers out of Green Bay that the Packers grew weary of Schroeder's inconsistency in running routes and catching. Crowell is coming off surgery to both knees and, if he returns healthy, he'll give the team speed and depth and likely will push one of the other receivers out of the starting lineup.

It's important for Crowell to return because the Lions don't have a lot of other

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Green Bay	L	6-28
Sept. 23	at Cleveland	L	14-24
Sept. 30	Open date		
Oct. 8	ST. LOUIS	L	0-35
Oct. 14	at Minnesota	L	26-31
Oct. 21	TENNESSEE	L	24-27
Oct. 28	CINCINNATI	L	27-31
Nov. 4	at San Francisco	L	13-21
Nov. 11	TAMPA BAY	L	17-20
Nov. 18	at Arizona	L	38-45
Nov. 22	GREEN BAY	L	27-29
Dec. 2	at Chicago	L	10-13
Dec. 9	at Tampa Bay	L	12-15
Dec. 16	MINNESOTA	W	27-24
Dec. 23	at Pittsburgh	L	14-47
Dec. 30	CHICAGO	L	0-24
Jan. 6	DALLAS	W	15-10

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Rookie QB Joey Harrington will replace Mike McMahon as the starter by midseason.
2. The Lions will struggle early, and the fans and media will be screaming for coach Marty Mornhinweg's head.
3. RB James Stewart will begin the year as the starter. But as the season progresses, he will lose playing time to somebody, perhaps seventh-round draft pick Luke Staley.
4. Despite offseason surgery on both knees, WR Germane Crowell will replace Az-Zahir Hakim in the lineup opposite Bill Schroeder. Crowell will be more consistent than Hakim, who isn't likely to shed his fumbler label immediately.
5. The team will stumble through another losing season, but DE Robert Porcher and DT Shaun Rogers will make the Pro Bowl.



Crowell



The Lions tried to replace Stewart, their feature back, whose lack of explosiveness and game-breaking ability concerns Mornhinweg.

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

options. Youngsters Larry Foster and Scotty Anderson are far too inconsistent. The team probably will look for a new return specialist, so Desmond Howard is expendable. Veteran Bert Emanuel might return, but he's reaching the final years of his career. If Detroit's Big Three can't come through all season long, the passing options will be greatly reduced.

The tight end position is worrisome because free agent Mikhael Ricks is more of a receiver, and Detroit can't depend on fifth-round pick John Owens to make an immediate contribution. The Lions let David Sloan depart as a free agent because they didn't like his blocking, but they haven't come close to replacing him. **GRADE: C**

Line—The team didn't make any major changes in this group, but there still are concerns, especially on the right side. Left tackle Jeff Backus played well as a rookie last year, and veteran Tony Semple, who was re-signed, had his best year at left guard. Eric Beverly played so well at center that the coaches never followed through on their desire to push Dominic Raiola into the starting lineup.

Right guard Brenden Stai, who arrived in Detroit as a free agent last year, struggled early but improved as the season progressed. He still needs to show more consistency and eliminate false-start penalties. One of the keys will be the play of starting right tackle Stockar McDougle. In his first two seasons, playing mostly at guard, McDougle has been up, down and, ultimately, out with injuries. During his limited time at tackle last year, he played very well at times but was shaky at others. If the Lions can get him on an even keel, the line could become a strength.

The depth looks good, especially with the re-signing of Matt Joyce, who has proved he can handle any of the guard or tackle spots. If McDougle has problems early, the team could switch to Joyce with no problems. Raiola must improve his pass protection before he'll get a chance to challenge Beverly.

Kerlin Blaise needs to get more playing time for the team to see whether he can develop. Seventh-round pick Victor Rogers, a 6-6, 331-pound tackle, has a shot at making the roster but could be destined for the practice squad. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSE Line—The Lions might have picked up the one player they needed to have a dominant line. Second-round pick Kalimba Edwards, who played end and outside linebacker in college, will play right end with Detroit. The team wants him to bulk up 15 pounds or so to 280, get stronger and learn some pass-rush moves. Once he does those three things, the team will unleash him. It might be expecting too much for Edwards to accomplish all that in one year, especially at end, one of the toughest positions for a rookie to learn.

Everywhere else on the line, the Lions are

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-3	Joey Harrington	QB	Oregon	If he isn't the starter in Week 1, it won't be long before he is.
2-35	Kalimba Edwards	DE	South Carolina	Should be a major part of the defensive-line rotation very soon.
3-68	Andre Goodman	CB	South Carolina	With a solid camp, he could start; at worst he'll be the nickel CB.
4-134	John Taylor	DE	Montana State	Lions don't expect much this year; he's very raw with a lot to learn.
5-138	John Owens	TE	Notre Dame	Better blocker than receiver but has a chance to win starting job.
6-175	Chris Cash	DB	Southern California	Coming off a knee injury, he will supply depth.
7-214	Luke Staley	RB	Brigham Young	Has a long history of injuries; if healthy, could be a third-down back.
7-252	Matt Murphy	TE	Maryland	His best bet to earn a roster spot will be on special teams.
7-259	Victor Rogers	OT	Colorado	Potential practice squad candidate—if he shows enough in camp.

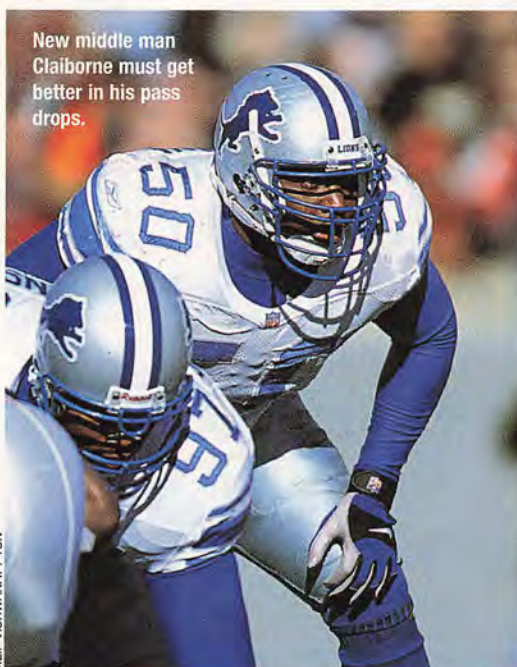
Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-5	Bryant Westbrook	CB	Texas	Starter with Lions
'98-20	Terry Fair	CB	Tennessee	Starter with Lions
'99-9	Chris Claiborne	LB	Southern California	Starter with Lions
'99-27	Aaron Gibson	OT	Wisconsin	Backup with Cowboys
'00-20	Stockar McDougle	OT	Oklahoma	Starter with Lions
'01-18	Jeff Backus	OT	Michigan	Starter with Lions

strong. At the other end spot, Robert Porcher is coming off another Pro Bowl season. His athletic skills are at their peak, and his leadership skills have become sharper.

Second-year tackle Shaun Rogers showed just how fast a rookie could learn. He was in the running for defensive player of the year and had more tackles than any other rookie linemen last season.

The key is tackle Luther Elliss and whether his oft-injured elbow can remain at 100 percent. Elliss essentially played with one arm last year and rarely had the use of his most potent weapon: the bull rush. If he stays healthy, the Lions will be strong against the run and get some pass pressure up the middle.



New middle man Claiborne must get better in his pass drops.

Kelvin Pritchett will provide depth at tackle, and Jared DeVries and James Hall can pick up the slack until Edwards is ready for full-time duty. **GRADE: A**

Linebackers—The unit has undergone a transformation, and the team still isn't done tinkering with it. Chris Claiborne has moved from his weakside spot to the middle, with Barrett Green getting his first full-time starting job in Claiborne's old position. The moves give the Lions more speed, but there are worries about a drop-off in production.

When Stephen Boyd (back) left the lineup in the middle of last season, Claiborne and Green moved into their new roles with mixed success. Now that they have had a full offseason to get acquainted with their new responsibilities, both players should show improvement. Although they have been good against the run, Claiborne and Green must get better in their pass drops. The Lions signed free agent Jeff Gooch strictly for the purpose of playing him in the nickel defense with Green.

The team needs to find an outside line-

backer to play the strong side, replacing Allen Aldridge. Detroit's new defense should make it an easier job to fill because the line-backer won't always line up over the tight end; instead, he'll be behind the end. In mid-May, the Lions were hoping to re-sign former Packer Brian Williams to fill that role. He was picked up late last season and played well, especially against the run. Fourth-year linebacker Clint Kriewaldt is another possibility to play on the strong side, but he's inexperienced and basically a special teams player.

With the problems the Lions expect to have in the secondary, it's imperative the linebackers do a good job in tightening the short and intermediate zones. **GRADE: C**

Secondary—The unit will have at least three new starters, including safeties Brian Walker and Corey Harris, a pair of free-agent pickups. There may be a fourth new starter if cornerback Terry Fair can't rebound from a slow-healing injury in his right foot.

Fair spent several weeks during the offseason with his foot immobilized, and there was some question whether he would be fully recovered by the start of the season. If the team doesn't pick up a veteran cornerback shortly before training camp, it will have to bank on rookie third-round pick Andre Goodman, who has great speed. That's a dangerous route to go, because he might need more time to get ready, and the Lions are hurting for depth.

Other than Lamar Campbell, who was re-signed and can play every position in the secondary, the Lions don't have a lot of quality in the backup roles. Veteran

Todd Lyght, a starter at corner last season, is slowing down but is in the picture as a nickel back.

Despite the flaws with the group, one of its biggest problems—lack of speed—has been addressed. The Lions will do a much better job of patrolling the deep zones, where they were victimized repeatedly last season. Frequently last season, the team was in the right defense, but its injury-riddled secondary couldn't get in position to make plays. **GRADE: D-**

SPECIAL TEAMS Once again, the Lions were among the league leaders in most categories. With some additional team speed, that should continue this season. Punter John Jett was highly effective, with only six touchbacks in 58 punts, 16 of which were dropped inside the 20-yard line.

Kicker Jason Hanson, normally a dependable performer, had an off year, hitting just 21 of 30 field-goal attempts, including a couple of misses inside the 40-yard line, where Hanson usually is automatic.

In the return and coverage areas, the

Moves

Key additions

LB Jeff Gooch
WR Az-Zahir Hakim
S Corey Harris
TE Mikhael Ricks
WR Bill Schroeder
S Bracey Walker
S Brian Walker

Free agent/Buccaneers
Free agent/Rams
Free agent/Ravens
Free agent/Chiefs
Free agent/Packers
Free agent/Chiefs
Free agent/Dolphins

Key losses

LB Allen Aldridge
QB Charlie Batch
LB Stephen Boyd
RB Reuben Droughns
WR Herman Moore
WR Johnnie Morton
S Ron Rice
SS Kurt Schulz
DE Tracy Scroggins
TE David Sloan
CB Bryant Westbrook

Free agent
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent/Broncos
Free agent
Free agent/Chiefs
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent/Saints
Free agent/Cowboys

Stadium/Media

Ford Field (65,000, artificial).

Ticket information: 800-616-7627.

Training site: 222 Republic Drive, Allen Park, Mich.; 313-216-4000.

Radio: WXYT-AM (1270).

Website: www.detroitlions.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 2-14 (5th in NFC Central); 1-7 in division; 2-10 in conference; 0-4 vs. AFC; 2-6 at home; 0-8 on road; 2-7 on artificial turf; 0-7 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Marty Mornhinweg's regular-season record: 2-14 in one season with Lions.

Mornhinweg's postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 33-47 (.413, ranks 24th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*312.1	8	16
Rushing offense	*87.4	13	28
Passing offense	*224.8	3	6
Scoring offense	270	12	26
Total defense	*345.1	11	26
Rushing defense	*124.6	12	23
Passing defense	*220.5	11	25
Scoring defense	424	15	30
Takeaways	22	14	29
Giveaways	38	13	T27
Turnover differential	-16	14	30
Sacks	31	10	T25
Sacks allowed	66	15	31

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Marty Mornhinweg	Head coach	8	2
Maurice Carthon	Offensive coordinator	9	2
Kurt Schottenheimer	Defensive coordinator	16	1
Jason Arapoff	Strength & conditioning	11	2
Malcolm Blacken	Asst. strength & cond.	7	2
Don Clemons	Def. asst./quality control	18	18
Charles Haley	Defensive line	2	2
Kevin Higgins	Quarterbacks	2	2
Ray Horton	Secondary	9	1
Larry Kirksey	Wide receivers	2	2
Sean Kugler	Tight ends	2	2
Sherman Lewis	Special assistant, offense	20	1
John Marshall	Assistant defensive line	23	1
Carl Mauck	Offensive line	18	2
Mike McHugh	Off. asst./quality control	2	2
Glenn Pires	Linebackers	7	2
Chuck Priefer	Special teams	13	6
Richard Selcer	Defensive nickel package	22	6

REALIGNMENT reality

The Lions won't see a major change with the restructuring of the division because they're keeping three of their oldest rivals—the Vikings, Bears and Packers. The team that left, the Buccaneers, is the one that the Lions needed to stay. Before getting swept during last season's 2-14 nightmare, the Lions had won 10 of 14 games against Tampa Bay. Meanwhile, the Lions haven't won in Green Bay in the Brett Favre era. They also have lost six of their last eight against the Vikings and three straight against the Bears, including a 24-0 shellacking last season at the Silverdome. The Lions, who have played in a dome since 1975, also lose an all-but-guaranteed warm-weather game each year and still will have to contend with potentially frigid conditions in Green Bay and Chicago (or Champaign, Ill., where the Bears will play their home games this season as Soldier Field is renovated).



DILIP USHMANAT / TSN

The secondary's success will depend in part on how well Fair rebounds from a subpar season.

Lions were excellent on kickoffs but shaky with punts. Detroit led the NFC in kickoff coverage, and Desmond Howard was second in the conference in returns with an average of 25.4 yards.

But the team gave up an average of 10 yards per punt return, and Howard managed only an 8.8-yard average. That's one reason the Lions will look to replace him as their return specialist this season, possibly with Hakim on punts. Brad Banta, despite a couple of miscues last season as the long snapper, will return in the role this year.

Part of the reason for the decline in the coverage team, especially late in the year, was the high amount of injuries the team suffered, forcing backups into starting roles and off-the-street free agents onto the special teams. **GRADE: A-**

BOTTOM LINE The Lions failed to make the many upgrades necessary to make a run at .500. Detroit will put some points on the board, but the weak defense makes the team vulnerable—especially against quality quarterbacks. **TSN**

Tom Kowalski covers the Lions for Booth Newspapers.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Bill Schroeder
	■ Germane Crowell
LT	● Jeff Backus
	■ Matt Joyce
LG	■ Tony Semple
	□ Kerlin Blaise
C	■ Eric Beverly
	□ Dominic Raiola
RG	■ Brenden Stai
	□ Tyrone Hopson
RT	■ Stockar McDougale
	□ Victor Jones
TE	□ Mikhael Ricks
	□ John Owens
WR	■ Az-Zahir Hakim
	■ Desmond Howard
QB	■ Joey Harrington
	■ Mike McMahon
RB	■ James Stewart
	□ Lamont Warren
FB	● Cory Schlesinger
	□ Brock Olivo

Defense

DE	■ Kalimba Edwards
	■ Jared DeVries
DT	● Shaun Rogers
	□ Travis Kirschke
DT	● Luther Elliss
	■ Kelvin Pritchett
DE	● Robert Porcher
	□ James Hall
WLB	■ Barrett Green
	□ Jeff Gooch
MLB	■ Chris Claiborne
	□ Josh Thornhill
SLB	□ Clint Kriewaldt
	□ Khari Samuel
CB	■ Andre Goodman
	■ Todd Lyght
CB	■ Terry Fair
	□ Chidi Iwuoma
SS	■ Corey Harris
	□ Bracey Walker
FS	■ Brian Walker
	■ Lamar Campbell

Specialists

K	● Jason Hanson
P	● John Jett
KR	● Desmond Howard
PR	● Desmond Howard
LS	□ Bradford Banta
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

LIONS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
14	Detmer, Ty	6-0/194	10-30-67	11	Brigham Young	T-Cle/01	4/4
3	Harrington, Joey	6-4/215	10-21-78	R	Oregon	D1/02	—
8	McMahon, Mike	6-2/213	2-8-79	2	Rutgers	D5b/01	8/3
Running backs							
31	Cason, Aveion	5-9/210	7-12-77	1	Illinois State	FA/01	6/0
26	Olivo, Brock (FB)	6-0/232	6-24-76	5	Missouri	FA/98	16/0
30	Schlesinger, Cory (FB)	6-0/246	6-23-72	8	Nebraska	D6b/95	16/13
33	Staley, Luke	6-1/227	9-16-80	R	Brigham Young	D7a/02	—
34	Stewart, James	6-1/226	12-27-71	8	Tennessee	UFA/00	11/10
21	Warren, Lamont	5-11/202	1-4-73	8	Colorado	FA/01	16/3
Receivers							
88	Anderson, Scotty	6-2/184	11-24-79	2	Grambling State	D5a/01	9/4
89	Banta, Brad (TE)	6-6/255	12-14-70	9	Southern California	UFA/01	16/0
82	Crowell, Germane	6-3/216	9-13-76	5	Virginia	D2a/98	5/4
87	Foster, Larry	5-10/196	11-7-76	3	Louisiana State	FA/00	13/5
81	Hakim, Az-Zahir	5-10/178	6-3-77	5	San Diego State	UFA/02	16/3
80	Howard, Desmond	5-10/185	5-15-70	11	Michigan	FA/99	14/1
84	Moore, Herman	6-4/218	10-20-69	12	Virginia	D1/91	3/1
49	Murphy, Matt (TE)	6-5/253	2-23-80	R	Maryland	D7b/02	—
83	Owens, John (TE)	6-3/266	1-10-80	R	Notre Dame	D5/02	—
86	Ricks, Mikhael (TE)	6-5/237	11-14-74	5	Stephen F. Austin	UFA/02	16/0
16	Schroeder, Bill	6-3/205	1-9-71	8	Wisconsin-La Crosse	UFA/02	14/14
36	Trejo, Stephen (TE)	6-2/258	11-20-77	2	Arizona State	FA/01	14/0
46	Waerig, John (TE)	6-2/264	4-8-76	1	Maryland	FA/01	1/0
Offensive linemen							
76	Backus, Jeff (T)	6-5/308	9-21-77	2	Michigan	D1/01	16/16
79	Beverly, Eric (C)	6-3/294	3-28-74	5	Miami of Ohio	FA/97	16/16
65	Blaise, Kerlin (G)	6-5/323	12-25-74	5	Miami (Fla.)	FA/98	6/0
75	Joyce, Matt (G)	6-7/305	3-30-72	8	Richmond	FA/01	16/12
73	McDougale, Stockar (T)	6-6/350	1-11-77	3	Oklahoma	D1/00	9/3
51	Raiola, Dominic (C)	6-1/303	12-30-78	2	Nebraska	D2a/01	16/0
72	Rogers, Victor (T)	6-6/331	10-10-78	R	Colorado	D7c/02	—
62	Semple, Tony (G)	6-5/303	12-20-70	9	Memphis State	D5/94	15/12
66	Stai, Brenden (G)	6-4/312	3-30-72	8	Nebraska	FA/00	16/16
Defensive linemen							
95	DeVries, Jared (E)	6-4/280	6-11-76	4	Iowa	D3/99	11/0
98	Edwards, Kalimba (E)	6-5/264	12-26-79	R	South Carolina	D2/02	—
94	Elliss, Luther (T)	6-5/305	3-22-73	8	Utah	D1/95	14/13
96	Hall, James (E)	6-2/271	2-4-77	3	Michigan	FA/00	15/0
77	Herron, Anthony (E)	6-3/280	9-24-79	1	Iowa	FA/01	1/0
67	Kirschke, Travis (E)	6-3/287	9-6-74	6	UCLA	FA/97	16/2
91	Porcher, Robert (E)	6-3/282	7-30-69	11	South Carolina State	D1/92	16/16
93	Pritchett, Kelvin (T)	6-3/319	10-24-69	12	Mississippi	UFA/99	16/1
92	Rogers, Shaun (T)	6-4/331	3-12-79	2	Texas	D2b/01	16/16
90	Taylor, John (T)	6-3/260	8-29-79	R	Montana State	D4/02	—
Linebackers							
50	Claiborne, Chris	6-3/255	7-26-78	4	Southern California	D1a/99	16/16
	Gooch, Jeff	5-11/225	10-31-74	7	Austin Peay State	FA/01	13/0
54	Green, Barrett	6-0/232	10-29-77	3	West Virginia	D2/00	14/10
58	Kriewaldt, Clint	6-1/236	3-16-76	4	Wis.-Stevens Point	D6/99	14/1
59	Samuel, Khari	6-3/240	10-14-76	3	Massachusetts	FA/01	10/0
Defensive backs							
39	Campbell, Lamar (CB)	5-11/183	8-29-76	5	Wisconsin	FA/98	12/12
29	Cash, Chris (CB)	5-11/170	7-13-80	R	Southern California	D6/02	—
23	Fair, Terry (CB)	5-9/184	7-20-76	5	Tennessee	D1/98	12/12
35	Goodman, Andre (CB)	5-10/182	8-8-78	R	South Carolina	D3/02	—
25	Harris, Corey (S)	5-11/200	10-25-69	11	Vanderbilt	UFA/02	16/16
40	Iwuoma, Chidi (CB)	5-8/180	2-19-78	2	California	FA/01	13/1
24	Lyght, Todd (CB)	6-0/190	2-9-69	12	Notre Dame	UFA/01	16/16
28	Walker, Bracey (S)	6-0/206	10-28-70	9	North Carolina	FA/02	15/0
45	Walker, Brian (S)	6-1/205	5-31-72	8	Washington State	FA/02	13/13
27	Wyrick, Jimmy (CB)	5-9/179	12-31-76	3	Minnesota	FA/00	16/0
Specialists							
4	Hanson, Jason (K)	5-11/182	6-17-70	11	Washington State	D2b/92	16/0
19	Jett, John (P)	6-0/197	11-11-68	10	East Carolina	UFA/97	13/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: CB Perry Carter, G Tyrone Hopson, OT Victor Jones, LB Josh Thornhill.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; A—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



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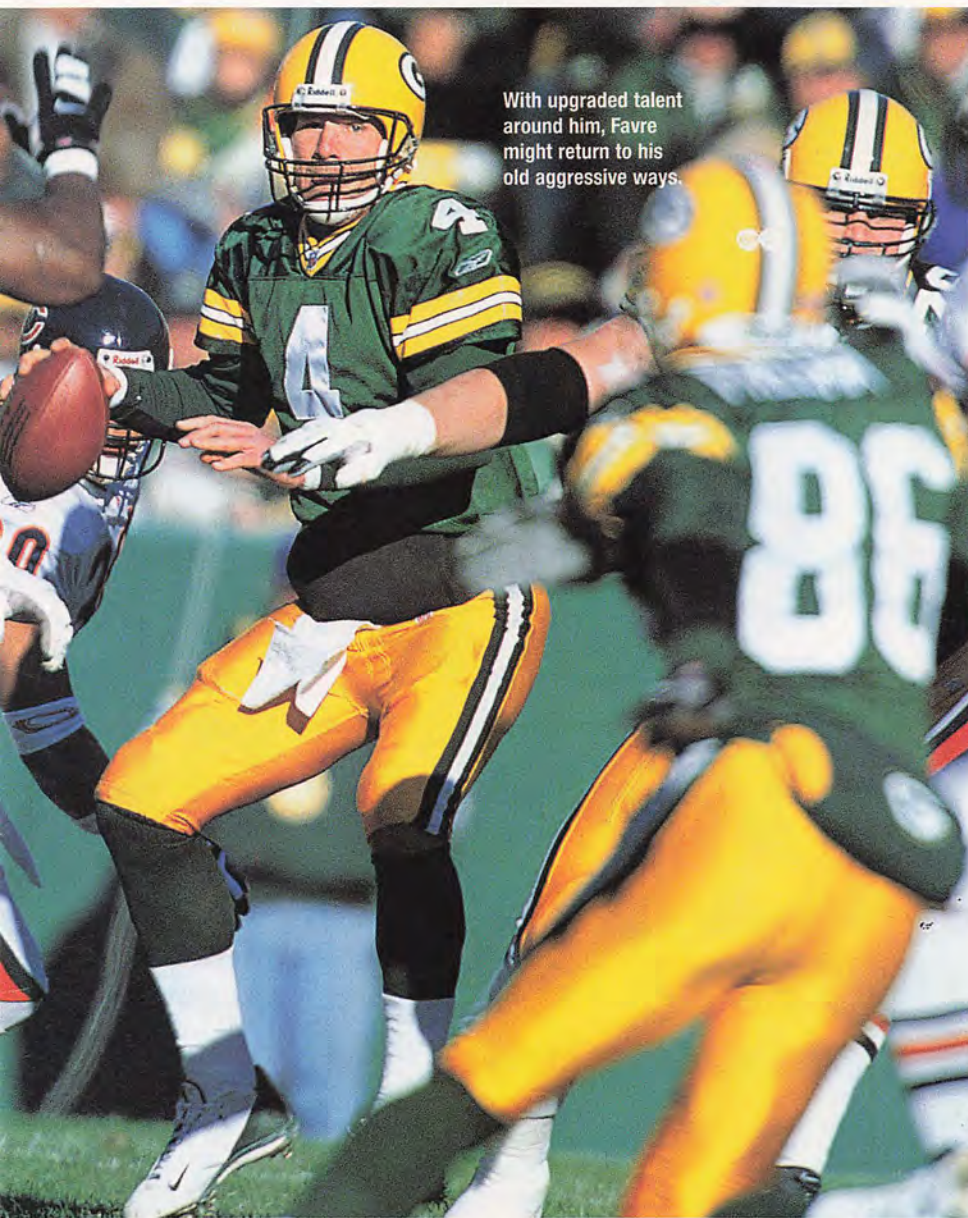
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Packers



With upgraded talent around him, Favre might return to his old aggressive ways.

his entire 2001 starting line in front of him, as well as a Pro Bowl starter in Bubba Franks and an up-and-comer in David Martin at tight end.

Wolf left Sherman with a lot of talent, and if the wide receiver moves pay off, the third-year coach could have the Packers back in the Super Bowl after an absence of five years.

The defense isn't dominant, but with the addition of free-agent right end Joe Johnson, it should be better against the run and good enough to give Favre all the opportunities he needs to make something special happen on offense.

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	ATLANTA	1:00	Nov. 10	DETROIT	1:00
Sept. 15	at New Orleans	1:00	Nov. 17	at Minnesota	1:00
Sept. 22	at Detroit	4:15	Nov. 24	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Sept. 29	CAROLINA	1:00	Dec. 1	CHICAGO	1:00
Oct. 7	at Chi. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 8	MINNESOTA	8:30
Oct. 13	at New Eng.	1:00	Dec. 15	at San Fran.	4:15
Oct. 20	WASHINGTON	4:15	Dec. 22	BUFFALO	1:00
Oct. 27	Open date		Dec. 29	at N.Y. Jets	4:15
Nov. 4	MIAMI (Mon.)	9:00	Strength of schedule: 28th		

COACHING Strategies—The passing game was the priority in Green through the '90s, but the emergence of Green the last two seasons caused a shift in the other direction. Green will continue to be the dominant figure outside of Favre, but the overhaul at receiver could mean a shift back to the old ways.

Offensive coordinator Tom Rossley is experimenting with ways to use Glenn and make him a 90-catch receiver. Glenn won't have to run 15-yard outs or deep posts to get the ball. As the flanker, he'll be moved into positions where he can draw man-to-man coverage, and he might get opportunities to run with the ball on screens and reverses.

Rossley sometimes has been creative in his game plan and then bland in his play-calling, but the lack of athletic ability in recent years handcuffed him because he knew his receivers weren't good enough to beat man coverage. Now he must open things up and find ways to make Glenn happy and the young receivers productive.

Defensive coordinator Ed Donatell should be able to be more discriminating with his blitzes because of the addition of Johnson. Donatell has an enormous line he should be able to count on to stop the run and enough good pass rushers to sit back in heavy coverage if he chooses.

Too often last season, Donatell was forced into blitz situations, and he is much more

BY TOM SILVERSTEIN

During his 16-month apprenticeship under Ron Wolf, Mike Sherman learned many things, but what seemed to leave an indelible mark on his being was Wolf's regret that he hadn't provided Brett Favre with more offensive weapons.

In his first full offseason as coach and general manager, Sherman took Wolf's lament to heart and tore up the receiving unit of the third-ranked passing game in the NFL. He rebuilt it with more athletic talent than Favre ever has enjoyed.

Devastated by his quarterback's six-inter-

ception performance in a 45-17 playoff loss to the Rams, Sherman said goodbye to his top three receivers and acquired Patriots bad boy Terry Glenn and unpolished but gifted Florida State phenom Javon Walker.

There is plenty of risk involved in Sherman's plan, considering Glenn quit on his team last year and Walker was a one-year wonder for the Seminoles. But Favre badly needed receiving threats who can destroy man-to-man coverage on third down, and Sherman gave them to him.

It helps that Favre still has Pro Bowl running back Ahman Green behind him and

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

I think the acquisition of **Terry Glenn** along with the drafting of **Javon Walker** should make for two different aspects for **Brett Favre** to work with. Glenn gives them more of a game breaker. He can catch a 5-yard pass and take it to the house. ... Speaking of Favre, he hasn't slowed down. His arm looks better than ever. Every time I hear about him going out to play golf, I worry that he's going to be better, just because playing golf brings about a different level of patience, which translates to the football field a lot of the time. ... I think picking up **Joe Johnson** in free agency and re-signing **Gilbert Brown** gives them a very solid defensive front. In Johnson, you're talking about a guy who over the last few years has been a top-notch lineman. That

OUTSIDE

Brown



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

VIEW

THE PACKERS

line and the rotation they use with (**Kabeer**) **Gbaja-Biamila** coming in in pass-rushing situations gives them a lot of variables to cause offenses some problems. ... Their first three draft picks (Walker, **Marques Anderson** and **Najeh Davenport**) will be the guys they're zeroing in on as far as being contributors this year. I think Anderson might have a chance to have a big impact depending on what happens with **LeRoy Butler's** injury situation. Davenport gives them a big, change-of-pace back and some versatility now that **Dorsey Levens** is gone. ... You're talking about a team that was right in the hunt last year. If they get their situation at middle linebacker solidified—they lost **Bernardo Harris**—they're going to be a tough team to deal with again.

comfortable when he can dictate the blitz. His biggest task will be simplifying the middle linebacker position so second-year pro **Torrance Marshall** can best use his athletic ability.

Style—Sherman is the harsh critic, and his assistant coaches provide the shoulders to lean on. There isn't a lot of yelling or screaming that goes on in practice or games, and the emphasis is more on the mental side of the game.

Sherman doesn't have a fire-and-brimstone assistant coach who can dress down the team when it needs it or fire it up when the occasion calls for it. When he addresses the players, he tries to reach more than just the fire in their belly. This never will be a

team with a hard edge, but it also won't take itself out of games with stupid penalties or careless mistakes. **GRADE: B+**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—

Favre's ability to make plays others can't sometimes works against him. He at times expects his receivers to make catches they aren't physically capable of making, leading to incompletions.

But last year Favre, 32, showed a newfound patience that helped him cut his interceptions from an average of 21 in the previous three seasons to 15. His completion rate was back over 60 percent, and his touchdowns were in the 30s for the first time since 1998.

Now that the talent has been upgraded around him, Favre might be able to return to a more aggressive approach, the kind that would have allowed him to go downfield instead of throwing ill-fated checkdowns against the Rams in the playoff loss.

Favre threw for 32 touchdowns last season, but 13 came from 5 yards and in, and he lacked a consistent deep threat to help spread out the defense. The addition of Glenn and Walker should do wonders in opening up lanes downfield, but don't discount how Martin might help in the middle.

Favre's biggest challenge will be developing chemistry with the newcomers and accepting that they won't read every play the same way he does. Early on, it could be frustrating, but he is patient with his receivers and in the long run should only benefit from the changes.

The backup job will go to Doug Pederson, who worked harder in the offseason than he has in some time and threw the ball well at minicamps. Pederson doesn't have much competition. Only rookie Craig Nall, a green and physically undeveloped project, stands to make the team among the other quarterbacks who will be brought to camp. **GRADE: A-**

Running backs—Green always will find it hard to average 20 carries per game in this offense, but that isn't always a bad thing. Only former Saints back **Ricky Williams** has needed fewer carries (561) than Green (567) to put together back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons, and the result is Green hasn't missed a game since joining the team in 2000.

Green's explosiveness as a runner and receiver make him a budding star, and the coaches continue to look for new ways to get the ball in his hands. Green accounted for

1,981 total yards last year, but a significant part of his contribution this season will be drawing an eighth man in the box so Favre has more room to pick apart the secondary.

If Green leads the team in receiving for a third consecutive year, the passing game won't have been as effective

as everyone hoped. The Packers want Green's receiving contribution to consist of more screens and flat routes than check-downs.

Finding a backup is a priority because injuries and fumbles are potential calamities awaiting Green. The club would like to resign **Dorsey Levens** as the backup but also was looking at several other veterans. **Rondell Mealey** and speedy **Herbert Goodman** are too young to count on as full-time backs but might be pressed into action.

GRADE: A-

Receivers—Sherman decided he couldn't win with **Antonio Freeman**, **Bill Schroeder** and **Corey Bradford** as his top receivers and

2001 results

Sept. 9	DETROIT	W	28-6
Sept. 24	WASHINGTON	W	37-0
Sept. 30	at Carolina	W	28-7
Oct. 7	at Tampa Bay	L	10-14
Oct. 14	BALTIMORE	W	31-23
Oct. 21	at Minnesota	L	13-35
Oct. 28	Open date		
Nov. 4	TAMPA BAY	W	21-20
Nov. 11	at Chicago	W	20-12
Nov. 18	ATLANTA	L	20-23
Nov. 22	at Detroit	W	29-27
Dec. 3	at Jacksonville	W	28-21
Dec. 9	CHICAGO	W	17-7
Dec. 16	at Tennessee	L	20-26
Dec. 23	CLEVELAND	W	30-7
Dec. 30	MINNESOTA	W	24-13
Jan. 6	at N.Y. Giants	W	34-25
Jan. 13	SAN FRAN.*	W	25-15
Jan. 20	at St. Louis*	L	17-45

*NFC playoff game

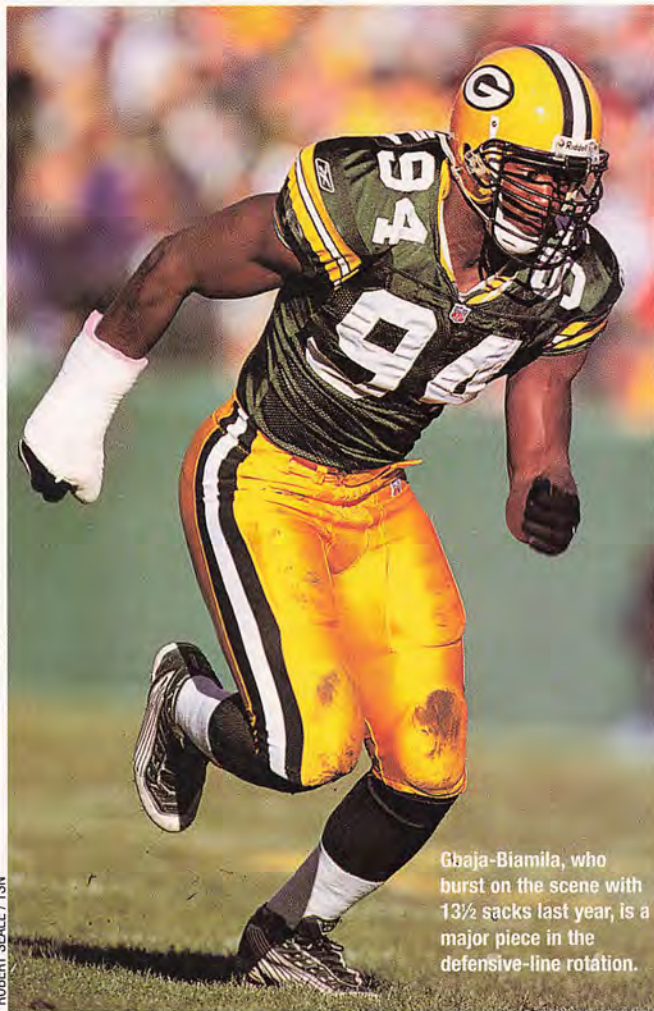
NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. The team's third-down success rate (36.5 percent, 15th in the NFL in 2001) will improve greatly with more speed at the receiver position.
2. Second-year TE David Martin, a terrific receiver, will take playing time away from **Bubba Franks**, a Pro Bowl starter last season.
3. DE **Jamal Reynolds**, the team's first-round pick in 2001, will continue to be nothing more than a third-down specialist and could be inactive during games against physical running teams.
4. CB **Tyrone Williams** will be playing his last season in Green Bay because of his big contract and inconsistent play.
5. Third-year WR **Charles Lee** finally will realize his potential and become the No. 3 receiver ahead of first-round draft pick **Javon Walker**. Lee caught only three passes last year but bulked up in the offseason.



Reynolds



Gbaja-Biamila, who burst on the scene with 13½ sacks last year, is a major piece in the defensive-line rotation.

remade the position with speed and quickness. Favre no longer will have to pull off his reads because his targets aren't able to come out of their cuts and separate from defenders.

Sherman took a big chance in trading for Glenn, whose skills as a receiver never have been disputed. Glenn's sullen behavior turned him into a cancer in the New England locker room last year, but Sherman has made it his mission to make sure Glenn succeeds. He expects to be rewarded with big plays and touchdowns. The slight but speedy Glenn isn't used to running the short smash and hitch routes the Packers use, but his ability to get off bump coverage and make hard cuts means Favre will get him the ball in clutch situations. His durability will be as big of a question mark as his behavior, especially given the precarious situations Favre puts his receivers in.

While Glenn will attempt to punish teams with crossing routes, slants and curls, Walker, the team's first-round pick, will be used to stretch zones with his 4.4 speed. Robert Ferguson, last year's second-round selection, will do the dirty work over the middle. That is the plan, but so much depends on how quickly all three mature.

Ferguson has unusual strength for a receiver and a linebacker's attitude, but until he refines his routes and figures out where Favre wants him, he'll be a project. Walker is a wild card because he played only two years of major college football and drops the ball too much. He'll be thrown into the fire right away and is expected to compete for playing time.

It would be foolish to count out Donald Driver, who finished strong last year, but Charles Lee probably won't be denied this season. Lee filled out physically during the offseason and could be a difficult player to cover man-to-man if he improves his concentration level.

The tight end position should be better with the maturation of Martin,

who has put on 10 pounds and still can stretch defenses down the middle. Despite making the Pro Bowl, Franks must improve in many areas. If he doesn't, Martin will take his job away. **GRADE: C**

Line—Three of the five offensive linemen will be starting with the Packers for a third year in a row, and two others will be starting for a second consecutive year. That kind of continuity is unusual in the NFL, and it should result in another solid year up front.

The Packers can thank Wolf for plucking tackles Chad Clifton and Mark Tauscher out of the 2000 draft. They have been saviors for a coach whose line was in a shambles when they arrived. This season, the line could be among the league's best.

It's unlikely any of the five starters will make the Pro Bowl, but their strength is as a unit. Aside from Clifton, there are no behemoths, and all four of the other linemen are asked to pull and trap, so timing is essential.

Tauscher is the unsung hero and perhaps the best all-around lineman in the group. He might not drive anyone out of the video frame, but he is very skilled with his positioning and relentless with his pursuit into the second level.

The guards, Mike Wahle and Marco Rivera, do most of the pulling, but center Mike Flanagan is athletic enough to do it, too. That gives the coaches plenty of options in designing traps against aggressive one-gap defenses.

The group's weakness is straight-ahead blocking against eight-man fronts. This isn't the kind of line that can play smash-mouth football for four quarters or run the ball whenever it wants to. Depth is a problem at tackle. Veteran Earl Dotson is shaky because of knee and back problems, and Barry Stokes went to the Browns as a free agent. Though little-known Kevin Jordan might be able to back up Clifton, don't be surprised if a veteran is brought in before camp. **GRADE: B**

DEFENSE Line—Age and injuries took a toll on the front four last season, and Sherman decided he needed a change.

So he jettisoned veterans Santana Dotson and John Thierry and replaced them by promoting unproven tackle Cletidus Hunt and signing Johnson, a big-name free agent. The two new starters will join end Vonnie Holliday and tackle Gilbert Brown to form the biggest, most physical line since Reggie White and Sean Jones were together.

The addition of Johnson changes everything. Instead of playing with an undersized speed rusher at one end position, the Packers have a dominant run stopper who is capable of double-digit sacks. Donatell no

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-20	Javon Walker	WR	Florida State	Didn't dominate in college, but Packers think his upside is huge.
3-92	Marques Anderson	DB	UCLA	Some in the organization think he could be another LeRoy Butler.
4-135	Najeh Davenport	FB	Miami (Fla.)	Viewed as team's FB of future but could get some snaps at RB.
5-156	Aaron Kampman	DE	Iowa	Considered a solid pass rusher with a very good motor.
5-164	Craig Nall	QB	NW (La.) State	A project, but Packers didn't have to expend a very high pick.
6-200	Mike Houghton	G	San Diego State	Natural position probably is guard, but he'll get practice time at LT.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-30	Ross Verba	G	Iowa	Starter with Browns
'98-19	Vonnie Holliday	DL	North Carolina	Starter with Packers
'99-25	Antuan Edwards	CB	Clemson	Backup with Packers
'00-14	Bubba Franks	TE	Miami (Fla.)	Starter with Packers
'01-10	Jamal Reynolds	DE	Florida State	Backup with Packers

longer will have to continually move up his safeties to stop the run.

Johnson should set the tone for the line with his hard-nosed, relentless style and will show Hunt and Holliday what it takes to be a Pro Bowl player. Brown's return is a plus, but his snaps probably will be limited so he can avoid the injuries that plagued him last season.

Donatell will use an eight-man rotation again and will rely heavily on rush specialist Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila, who burst on the scene with 13½ sacks last year in his first full season. Donatell could bump Holliday and Johnson inside and go with Gbaja-Biamila

side starter Nate Wayne, who battled patellar tendinitis most of last season. Wayne is excellent in pursuit and quick in his drops and should benefit from having four 300-pounders in front of him. Sometimes Wayne is overly aggressive and loses sight of the big picture, but the coaches will find ways to run him through holes so he can make big plays. Strongside starter Na'il Diggs, coming off a disappointing season in which an elbow injury affected his tackling and confidence, will continue to shadow the tight end.

There isn't a whole lot of depth at the position, and injuries could devastate the unit. Donatell relies heavily on his linebackers to blitz in the base package, but if he isn't happy with the production, he might play an increased amount of nickel coverage. **GRADE: C**

Secondary—There's a lot of depth in the defensive backfield, but questions linger.

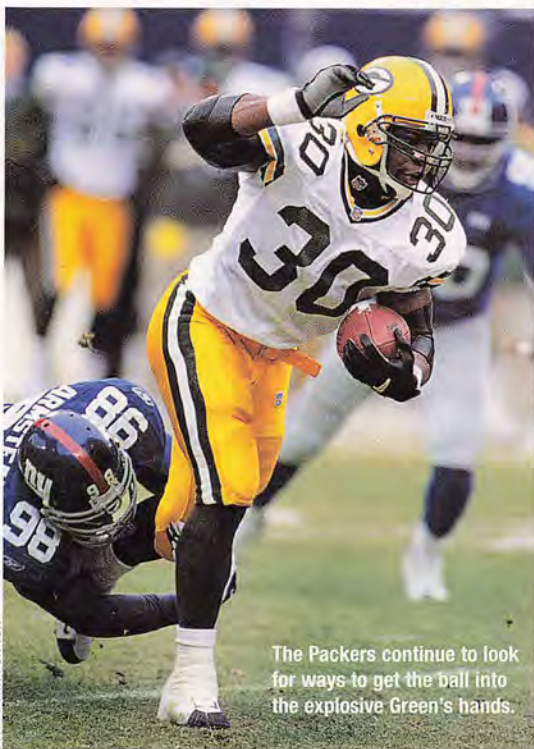
The most critical is whether strong safety LeRoy Butler's injured shoulder will allow him to return for a 13th season. The secondary has come to rely so heavily on his leadership that his absence could create a huge void.

Free safety Darren Sharper needs Butler because he can be freed to take chances and make plays when Butler is on the field. The top candidate to replace Butler is former first-round pick Antuan Edwards, but he is coming off major knee surgery and never has been more than a nickel back. Edwards hasn't shown the toughness to be an in-the-box player and seems better suited for coverage.

Rookie Marques Anderson is an intriguing prospect who might play quite a bit. He is bright and instinctive and has some corner ability. He was drafted to someday take over Butler's spot and could be an effective complement to Sharper.

The corner position is solid. Mike McKenzie showed last year that he is on the verge of becoming one of the best in the NFC and probably will start taking more chances now that he knows the league a little better. Tyrone Williams can go from a shutdown corner to the weak link, depending on his mood. But it doesn't look as if second-year pro Bhawoh Jue or veteran Tod McBride will unseat Williams because of his experience. **GRADE: B+**

SPECIAL TEAMS It was a disappointing year for Frank Novak's unit. Kicker Ryan Longwell made an uncharacteristically low 64.5 percent of his field-goal attempts, including four of 10 from 45 yards and beyond, and returner Allen Rossum was hurt most of the season.



The Packers continue to look for ways to get the ball into the explosive Green's hands.

and 2001 first-round pick Jamal Reynolds on third downs, but Reynolds looked like a bust last year and must make huge strides.

The four starters only contributed 14 of the team's 52 sacks last season, so it will be up to Johnson and Hunt to lift those numbers. If they can, Donatell won't have to rely on the blitz so much. **GRADE: B**

Linebackers—This is the weak spot going into training camp because there isn't an established veteran in the middle.

All indications are that Marshall, a second-year pro, will be given every chance to win the starting job. Marshall is an explosive hitter with outstanding speed, but he struggles with assignments and hasn't shown he can be trusted when offenses frequently shift and use motion. The position might have to be stripped down to make sure he can handle it. If Marshall doesn't work out in minicamps and training camp, the team might sign a veteran to push him for the job.

The most productive linebacker is weak-

Moves

Key additions

WR Terry Glenn
DE Joe Johnson

Trade/Patriots
Free agent/Saints

Key losses

WR Corey Bradford
DT Santana Dotson
DT Jim Flanagan
LB Bernardo Harris
S Billy Jenkins
RB Dorsey Levens
CB Allen Rossum
WR Bill Schroeder
OL Barry Stokes
DE John Thierry
LB K.D. Williams

Free agent/Texans
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent/Bills
Free agent
Free agent/Falcons
Free agent/Lions
Free agent/Browns
Free agent/Falcons
Free agent

Stadium/Media

Lambeau Field (To be announced, grass).

Ticket information: 920-496-5719.

Training site: St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wis.; 920-496-5700.

Radio: WTMJ-AM (620).

Website: www.packers.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 12-4 (2nd in NFC Central); 6-2 in division; 9-3 in conference; 3-1 vs. AFC; 7-1 at home; 5-3 on road; 1-1 on artificial turf; 11-3 on grass.
2001 playoff record: Defeated San Francisco, 25-15, in NFC wild-card game; lost to St. Louis, 45-17, in NFC semifinal game.

Mike Sherman's regular-season record: 21-11 in two seasons with Packers.

Sherman's postseason record: 1-1 in one appearance with Packers.

Team record last five years: 53-27 (.663, 1st in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*341.4	3	6
Rushing offense	*105.8	10	21
Passing offense	*235.6	2	3
Scoring offense	390	3	5
Total defense	*308.6	6	12
Rushing defense	*110.6	8	16
Passing defense	*198.0	6	15
Scoring defense	266	3	5
Takeaways	39	T1	T2
Giveaways	27	T5	T9
Turnover differential	12	4	5
Sacks	52	2	3
Sacks allowed	22	2	3

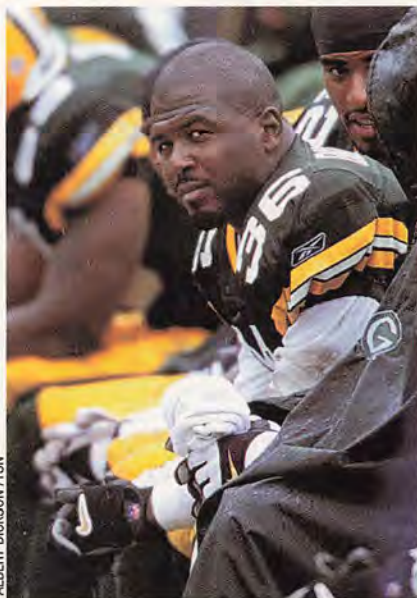
*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Mike Sherman	Head coach	6	5
Bob Slowik	Asst. HC/defensive backs	11	3
Tom Rossley	Offensive coordinator	7	3
Ed Donatell	Defensive coordinator	13	3
Larry Beightol	Offensive line	18	4
Darrell Bevell	Offensive assistant	3	3
Sylvester Croom	Running backs	16	2
Stan Drayton	Off. QC/spec. teams asst.	2	2
Jethro Franklin	Defensive line	3	3
Jeff Jagodzinski	Tight ends	4	4
Mark Lovat	Strength and cond. asst.	4	4
Brad Miller	Def. asst./quality control	2	2
Frank Novak	Special teams	13	3
Bo Pelini	Linebackers	9	3
Barry Rubin	Strength & conditioning	8	8
Pat Ruel	Assistant offensive line	3	2
Ray Sherman	Wide receivers	15	3
Lionel Washington	Defensive backs assistant	4	4

REALIGNMENT reality

The division will come down to the Packers and Bears again. How much longer the Packers can dominate the series—they've won 14 of the last 16—depends on Brett Favre, who consistently is the difference between the two teams. The departure of the Bucs doesn't impact the Packers much because the teams split their meetings in each of the last four seasons. But because the Bucs usually were one of the contenders in the division, their absence makes the road to first place a little easier. The rivalry between the teams had become fierce in recent years, and Favre won't miss nursing bruises delivered by Warren Sapp. The Packers play at Tampa Bay this year, but it will be a while before they meet after that. The Packers will play at two new stadiums in the division this season. The Bears' home games will be in Champaign, Ill., while Soldier Field is remodeled, and the Lions move into a new dome.



ALBERT DICKSON/TSN

The Packers need Butler to resume his critical role on defense, but will he be healthy enough?

Longwell had hit 84.7 percent of his field-goal attempts before last season, so there's a possibility he just had an off year. His kickoffs never will be great, which means the coverage units must be improved.

Rossum signed with the Falcons in the offseason, so the return game remains a major concern. Ferguson, Lee, Sharper and safety Scott Frost are possibilities on punt returns. And Mealey, Goodman and Levens—should he re-sign—are candidates on kickoff returns. Rob Davis doesn't do anything but long snap, but he is so good at it the coaches don't dare consider going into the year without him. **GRADE: C+**

BOTTOM LINE This team is stacked with athletic talent and should be in the Super Bowl hunt if its wide receiver position comes together. Sherman almost doubled his number of impact players with offseason acquisitions and will rely on them to carry the team beyond the second-round of the playoffs. **TSN**

Tom Silverstein covers the Packers for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ☐ Robert Ferguson

☐ Charles Lee

LT ☒ Chad Clifton

☐ Kevin Jordan

LG ☒ Mike Wahle

☐ Bill Ferrario

C ☒ Mike Flanagan

☐ Frank Winters

RG ☒ Marco Rivera

☒ Mark Tauscher

RT ☒ Mark Tauscher

☐ Earl Dotson

TE ☒ Bubba Franks

☒ David Martin

WR ☒ Terry Glenn

☐ Donald Driver

QB ☒ Brett Favre

☐ Doug Pederson

RB ☒ Ahman Green

☐ Rondell Mealey

FB ☒ William Henderson

☐ Najeh Davenport

Defense

LE ☒ Vonnie Holliday

☐ Cletidus Hunt

NT ☒ Gilbert Brown

☐ Rod Walker

DT ☒ Cletidus Hunt

☐ Steve Warren

RE ☒ Joe Johnson

☒ K. Gbaja-Biamila

WLB ☒ Nate Wayne

☐ Chris Gizzi

MLB ☐ Torrance Marshall

☐ Chris Gizzi

SLB ☒ Na'il Diggs

☐ Rob Holmberg

LCB ☒ Mike McKenzie

☐ Tod McBride

RCB ☒ Tyrone Williams

☐ Bhawoh Jue

SS ☒ LeRoy Butler

☐ Marques Anderson

FS ☒ Darren Sharper

☐ Antuan Edwards

Specialists

K ☒ Ryan Longwell

P ☒ Josh Bidwell

KR ☐ Herbert Goodman

PR ☐ Robert Ferguson

LS ☒ Rob Davis

☒ Can play for any team

☒ Solid player

☐ Fringe player

PACKERS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
4	Favre, Brett	6-2/225	10-10-69	12	Southern Mississippi	T-Atl/92	16/16
12	Nail, Craig	6-3/227	4-21-79	R	Northwestern State	D5b/02	—
18	Pederson, Doug	6-3/220	1-31-68	10	Northeast Louisiana	FA/01	16/0

Running backs

44	Davenport, Najeh (FB)	6-1/246	2-8-79	R	Miami (Fla.)	D4/02	—
29	Goodman, Herbert	5-11/205	8-31-77	3	Graceland (Iowa)	FA/00	7/0
30	Green, Ahman	6-0/217	2-16-77	5	Nebraska	T-Sea./00	16/16
33	Henderson, William (FB)	6-1/253	2-19-71	8	North Carolina	D3b/95	16/8
32	Mealey, Rondell	6-0/224	2-24-77	3	Louisiana State	D7e/00	11/0

Receivers

81	Davis, Tyrone (TE)	6-4/260	6-30-72	7	Virginia	T-NYJ/97	4/2
80	Driver, Donald	6-0/185	2-2-75	4	Alcorn State	D7b/99	13/2
89	Ferguson, Robert	6-1/209	12-17-79	2	Texas A&M	D2/01	1/0
88	Franks, Bubba (TE)	6-6/260	1-6-78	3	Miami (Fla.)	D1/00	16/14
86	Freeman, Antonio	6-1/198	5-27-72	8	Virginia Tech	D3d/95	16/16
83	Glenn, Terry	5-11/195	7-23-74	7	Ohio State	T-NE/02	4/1
16	Hayes, Windrell	5-11/198	12-14-76	3	Southern California	D5/00	1/0
82	Lee, Charles	6-2/205	11-19-77	3	Central Florida	D7c/00	7/0
87	Martin, David (TE)	6-4/250	3-13-79	2	Tennessee	D6/01	14/1
84	Walker, Javon	6-3/210	10-14-78	R	Louisiana State	D1/02	—

Offensive linemen

76	Clifton, Chad (T)	6-5/327	6-26-76	3	Tennessee	D2/00	14/13
60	Davis, Rob (C)	6-3/286	12-10-68	7	Shippensburg, Pa.	FA/97	16/0
72	Dotson, Earl (T)	6-4/317	12-17-70	10	Texas A&I	D3/93	12/0
58	Flanagan, Mike (C)	6-5/297	11-10-73	7	UCLA	D3a/96	16/16
69	Houghton, Mike (G)	6-5/313	12-1-79	R	San Diego State	D6/02	—
62	Rivera, Marco (G)	6-4/310	4-26-72	7	Penn State	D6/96	16/16
65	Tauscher, Mark (T)	6-3/320	6-17-77	3	Wisconsin	D7a/00	16/16
68	Wahle, Mike (G)	6-6/310	3-29-77	5	Navy	SD-2/98	16/16
52	Winters, Frank (C)	6-3/305	1-23-64	16	Western Illinois	UFA/92	4/0

Defensive linemen

93	Brown, Gilbert (T)	6-2/339	2-22-71	9	Kansas	W-Min/93	11/11
94	Gbaja-Biamila, Kabeer	6-4/253	9-24-77	3	San Diego State	D5a/00	16/0
90	Holliday, Vonnice (E)	6-5/290	12-11-75	5	North Carolina	D1/98	16/16
97	Hunt, Cletidus (T)	6-4/300	1-2-76	4	Kentucky State	D3b/99	12/4
91	Johnson, Joe (E)	6-4/270	7-11-72	9	Louisville	UFA/02	16/16
74	Kampman, Aaron (T)	6-4/286	11-30-79	R	Iowa	D5a/02	—
98	Lyon, Billy (E)	6-5/295	12-10-73	5	Marshall	FA/97	12/0
99	Reynolds, Jamal (E)	6-3/266	2-20-79	2	Florida State	D1/01	6/0
95	Walker, Rod (T)	6-3/320	8-4-76	2	Troy State	FA/00	11/0

Linebackers

59	Diggs, Na'il	6-4/238	7-8-78	3	Ohio State	D4a/00	16/16
57	Gizzi, Chris	6-0/235	3-8-75	3	Air Force	W-Den/00	12/1
56	Holmberg, Rob	6-3/240	5-6-71	9	Penn State	FA/01	7/2
51	Marshall, Torrance	6-2/255	6-12-77	2	Oklahoma	D3b/01	14/1
54	Wayne, Nate	6-0/237	1-12-75	5	Mississippi	T-Den./00	12/12

Defensive backs

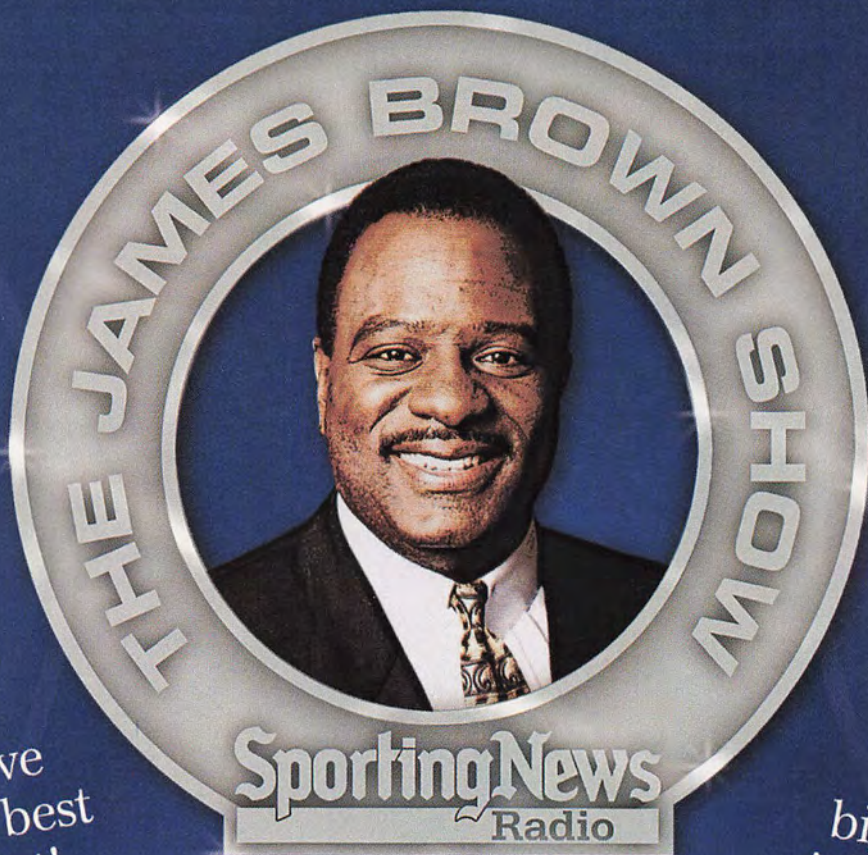
20	Anderson, Marques (S)	5-11/211	5-26-79	R	UCLA	D3/02	—
28	Bowen, Matt (S)	6-1/208	11-12-76	3	Iowa	FA/01	6/0
36	Butler, LeRoy (S)	6-0/203	7-19-68	13	Florida State	D2/90	9/9
24	Edwards, Antuan (CB)	6-1/210	5-26-77	4	Clemson	D1/99	3/0
47	Frost, Scott (S)	6-3/219	1-4-75	5	Nebraska	FA/01	12/0
21	Jue, Bhawoh (CB)	6-0/200	5-24-79	2	Penn State	D3a/01	15/7
27	McBride, Tod (CB)	6-1/205	1-26-76	4	UCLA	W-Sea./99	16/0
34	McKenzie, Mike (CB)	6-0/190	4-26-76	4	Memphis	D3a/99	16/16
42	Sharper, Darren (S)	6-2/205	11-3-75	6	William & Mary	D2/97	16/16
22	Thibodeaux, Keith (CB)	5-11/189	5-16-74	5	Northwestern State	FA/01	12/1
37	Williams, Tyrone (CB)	5-11/193	5-31-73	7	Nebraska	D3b/96	16/16

Specialists

9	Bidwell, Josh (P)	6-3/220	3-13-76	3	Oregon	D4b/99	16/0
8	Longwell, Ryan (K)	6-0/200	8-16-74	6	California	W-SF/97	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: DE Aaron Fields, TE Rufus French, QB Josh Heupel, FB Kevin McLeod, CB Hurley Tarver, DE Jared Tomich.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



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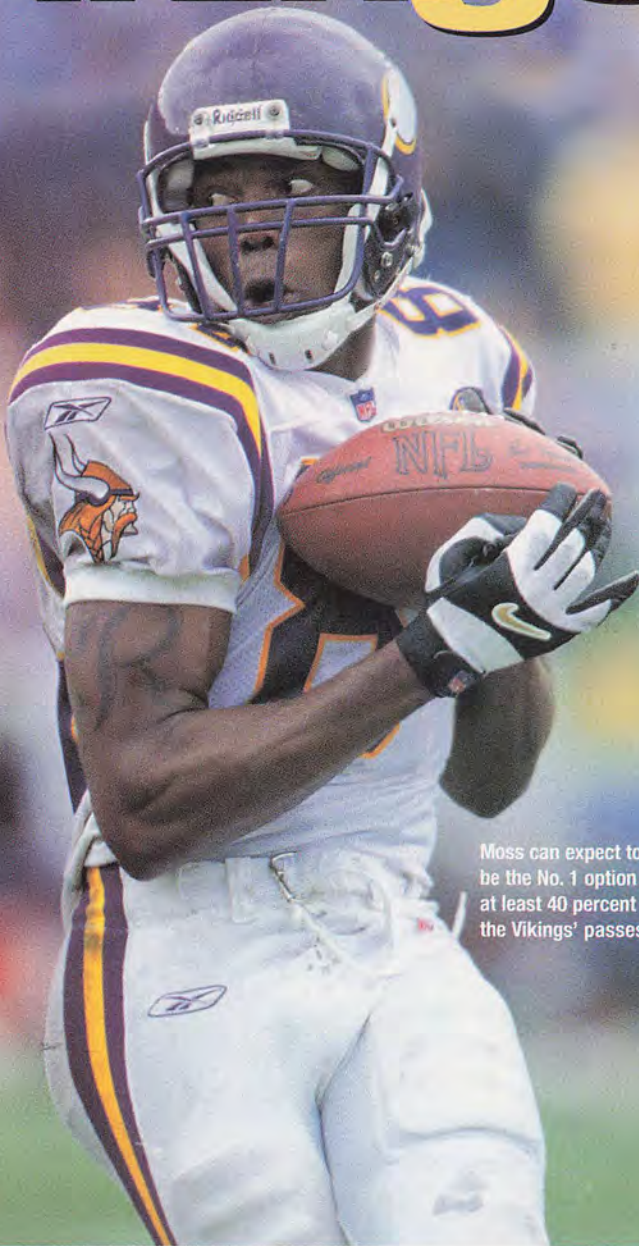
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Vikings



Moss can expect to be the No. 1 option on at least 40 percent of the Vikings' passes.

PETER NEWCOMB FOR TSN

BY BILL WILLIAMSON

Dennis Green paid the price after the Vikings slipped from their usual post-season perch last season. Now it's up to a first-time head coach, Mike Tice, to bring back Minnesota to its winning ways.

It won't be easy. Tice, 43, has one of the biggest reconstruction jobs in the NFL this year. A team that made it to the NFC championship game in two of the previous three years lost three games by 27 points or more in a disastrous 2001 season.

It will be Tice's task to reconstruct the roster and re-energize a team that lost its way.

"We have a plan here, and it's a three-year plan," says Tice, who was an assistant coach under Green for the past six seasons and played for the Vikings in the early 1990s. "But we know we have to get some results this season. And we will."

Tice knows the key both on and off the field is enigmatic star wide receiver Randy Moss. The two have a good relationship, and Tice is confident Moss will stay focused. It might help that Tice plans to make Moss more of a focus of the offense than ever.

Defensively, the Vikings will have up to nine new starters after finishing 27th in the

league in total defense a year ago. The defense will try to build around a strong line.

This team should be better, and Tice will bring a needed, fresh attitude. But there still is plenty of work to be done before this is a playoff-quality team.

COACHING Strategies—One of the reasons Tice was selected as coach is his familiarity with the Vikings' system. But he will make changes.

Offensively, the one-tailback, double-tight-end set—with pass-catcher Byron Chamberlain and converted fullback Jim Kleinsasser supplying the blocking—will be used and Tice will put a premium on the run. He thinks running back Michael Bennett, who struggled at times last season as a rookie, can be a major factor.

Tice wants balance. Of course, the focal

2002 schedule

Sept. 8	at Chicago	1:00	Nov. 10	N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
Sept. 15	BUFFALO	4:15	Nov. 17	GREEN BAY	1:00
Sept. 22	CAROLINA	1:00	Nov. 24	at New Eng.	1:00
Sept. 29	at Seattle	8:30	Dec. 1	ATLANTA	1:00
Oct. 6	Open date		Dec. 8	at Green Bay	8:30
Oct. 13	DETROIT	1:00	Dec. 15	at New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 20	at N.Y. Jets	1:00	Dec. 21	MIAMI (Sat.)	1:30
Oct. 27	CHICAGO	1:00	Dec. 29	at Detroit	1:00
Nov. 3	at Tampa Bay	1:00	Strength of schedule: T 13th		

point of the offense remains the spectacular combination of quarterback Daunte Culpepper and Moss.

The team conducted an offseason study and found out that in the five games last season in which Moss was the intended receiver for at least 40 percent of the team's pass plays, the 5-11 Vikings were 4-1. Tice says Moss will get at least 40 percent of the pass plays directed to him in every game.

The new offensive coordinator is Scott Linehan, 38, a career college coach. Tice likes Linehan's fresh approach. Like Tice, Linehan believes in balance and wants to run the ball. Defensively, Tice wants to be much more aggressive and better at stopping the run. Longtime NFL assistant Willie Shaw, who last season held the dual roles of assistant head coach and secondary coach, will be in charge of the entire defense.

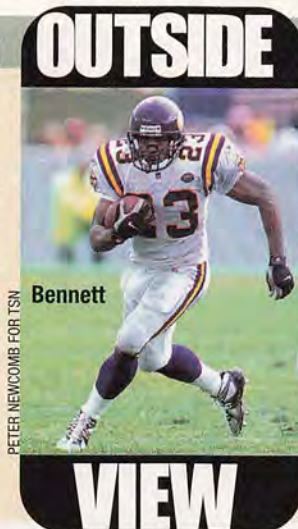
Style—Tice is a unique character. He's 6-8, 290 pounds and proud of the fact he's the biggest head coach in NFL history. He also is vocal and opinionated. A native New Yorker, he jokes that one of his goals is to make every one of his players cry at least once.

It may happen. Tice will coach them hard every day and not let up. He will be loud and expect his assistants to be loud. Tice can be humorous, but he believes in a business-first approach. Cell phones already have been banned in the locker room. Laziness—a label that some on this team have been branded with—will not be tolerated.

Still, Tice is a master at working with people, and one of his main strengths is

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

I think they'll try to be more physical on both sides of the ball. I think they'll focus on running the ball, shutting down the run, making you pass and then coming after you. ... They're going to try to do some different things to move **Randy Moss** around and get him the ball. And he should get it more, being the guy with **(Cris) Carter** gone. ... **D'Wayne Bates** should be able to give them a lot of what Carter gave them. He's going to be faster and quicker. If he can be consistent and be that go-to guy when teams triple-cover Moss, that will be a big plus for them. ... **Michael Bennett** never really proved he was a legit guy last year. He's got the speed, but they're going to have to find ways to get him to make more plays. If they don't, they won't



Bennett

PETER NEWCOMB FOR TSN

THE VIKINGS

be much of a threat in the running game. ... Their offensive line was not their strong suit last year. **Matt Birk** is probably their only legitimate player. **David Dixon** is a big man, but he's limited. If they didn't draft **Bryant McKinnie**, they'd be struggling. ... I thought they improved defensively. **Henri Crockett**, the middle linebacker, was a good pickup. **Lorenzo Bromell** and **Kenny Mixon** should help—Bromell vs. the pass, and Mixon is a very good run defender. I thought the drafting of **Raonall Smith** was an excellent pick, because he will be a playmaker at linebacker. ... The biggest blow was losing **Robert Griffith** at safety. He was hurt a lot last year, so they may have thought he was on the downside of his career. But the guy made plays.

balancing his stern side with a cuddly side. What will make this approach work is that it will be consistent throughout the staff.

Tice painstakingly put together a staff of coaches with personalities similar to his: stern but reasonable. The biggest requisite for being on Tice's staff is teaching ability. Ownership has said it thought some of Green's assistants were not good teachers. Tice craves teaching.

Assistants such as Shaw, George O'Leary (defensive line), Steve Loney (offensive line) and Brian Baker (linebackers) have reputations as fine instructors. Watch for this staff to instantly earn credibility with the team and to grow into one of the better staffs in the league. **GRADE: C**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Tice put Culpepper on the spot 30 minutes into his tenure by saying at his introductory press conference that his quarterback must become a better student of the game. Tice didn't misspeak. He wants Culpepper to take the next step. The Vikings are very happy with Culpepper, but they think it's time for him to take control of the offense. This will be Culpepper's third season as the starter, and Tice figures that with a better understanding of reading defenses, Culpepper, 25, can be even more dangerous. Culpepper has long admitted he needs to do a better job in his "hot reads."

Watch for Culpepper to rise to this challenge. He is a self-motivated player with a good head on his shoulders. His entire career and, really, his entire hardscrabble life have been based on improving and taking challenges head-on.

The backup will be Todd Bouman, a solid but unspectacular player now in his sixth year with the team. He started the first three games of his career last season when

Culpepper was injured. Bouman played well, giving the Vikings hope he can handle the job for a short while if needed. **GRADE: B**

Running backs—The Vikings tried to re-create the presence of the retired Robert Smith by drafting Bennett in the first round last year. Like Smith, Bennett is a lightning-quick north-south runner who has great explosiveness. But Bennett the rookie did not compare with Smith the seasoned pro. Because of that, Green and offensive coordinator Sherman Lewis shied away from the running game. On several occasions, the Vikings ran the ball fewer than 15 times in close games. Just 31 percent of the team's total yardage last season came on running plays.

That will change under Tice, who moved assistant offensive line coach Dean Dalton to running backs coach in hopes of spurring a growth spurt in Bennett.

Bennett, who averaged 4 yards per carry, came on toward the end of the season, and the new coaching staff has faith in him. But he's the type of player who needs 20-25 carries a game. The more the ball is in his hands, the more opportunities he'll have to bust long gains. With the balanced, patient approach Tice and Linehan will use, Bennett could flourish. Doug Chapman is a serviceable backup who started three games last season. **GRADE: C-**

Receivers—Moss put up solid numbers last year—82 catches for 1,233 yards—but he can, and must, do better. Look for the Vikings to give him every opportunity to set career highs in virtually all receiving categories.

Linehan, knowing Moss will be double-teamed often, plans to move him around. Moss will be used at both receiver spots, in motion and even in the backfield.

Moss should flourish in this system. He has been criticized for taking plays off, but he only does it when he knows the ball isn't coming his way. With more chances to get involved, Moss should be re-energized.

But Moss can't do it all alone. With the team and Cris Carter mutually parting ways in the offseason, D'Wayne Bates likely will get the first chance to succeed Carter as the team's top possession receiver. Bates, a former third-round draft pick of the Bears, has great leaping ability and can play the hash marks like Carter, but he has yet to show much consistency. In three seasons with Chicago, Bates caught 15 passes.

Chamberlain, a tight end who caught a

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

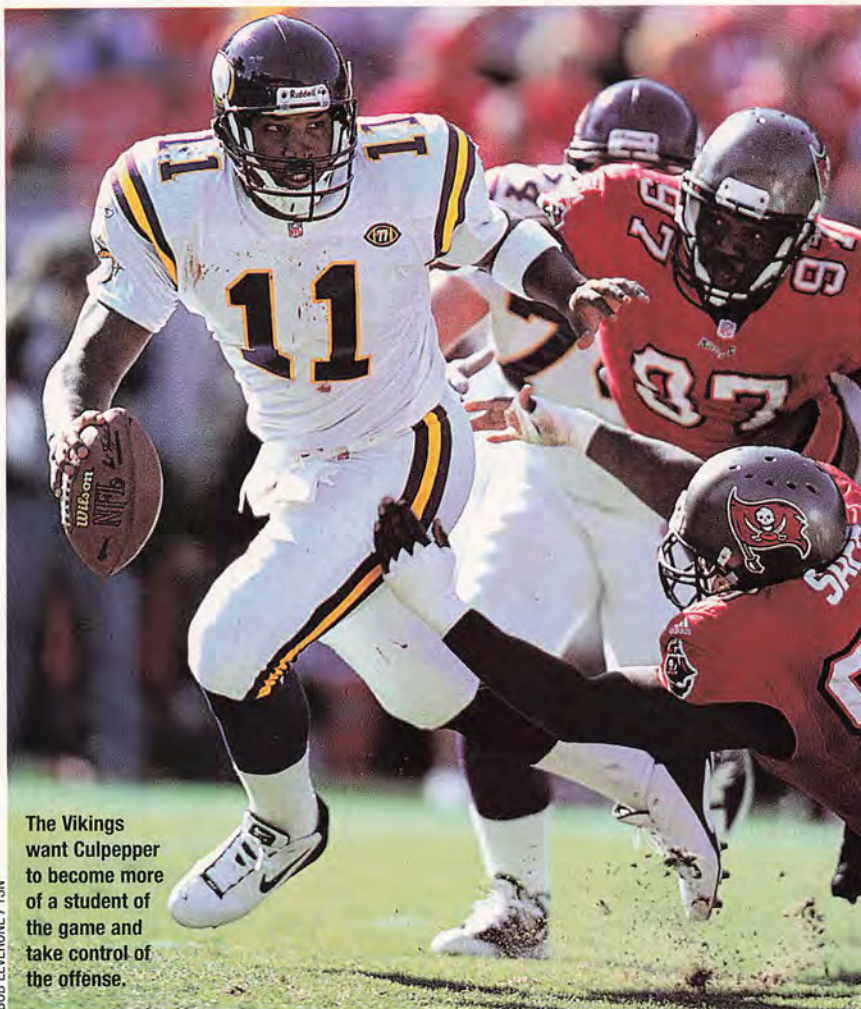
1. Mike Tice will hit it off well with the players. This first-time head coach is intense and expects a lot from his team, but it will respond to him.
2. Some Vikings are not known for giving a full effort at all times, especially WR Randy Moss. That will change. He will not take many plays off with Tice in his ear.
3. Michael Bennett will have a 1,000-yard rushing season. Unlike last year, the Vikings will give him a chance to get in a rhythm and stay in it.
4. DEs Kenny Mixon and Lorenzo Bromell will quickly get comfortable in their new northern locale and have good seasons. The Vikings' defense will benefit as a result.
5. The offensive line again will become an area of strength with the addition of rookie LT Bryant McKinnie, who will mesh well with C Matt Birk and RT Chris Liwski.



Bromell

2001 results

Sept. 9	CAROLINA	L	13-24
Sept. 23	at Chicago	L	10-17
Sept. 30	TAMPA BAY	W	20-16
Oct. 7	at New Orleans	L	15-28
Oct. 14	DETROIT	W	31-26
Oct. 21	GREEN BAY	W	35-13
Oct. 28	at Tampa Bay	L	14-41
Nov. 4	Open date		
Nov. 11	at Philadelphia	L	17-48
Nov. 19	N.Y. GIANTS	W	28-16
Nov. 25	CHICAGO	L	6-13
Dec. 2	at Pittsburgh	L	16-21
Dec. 9	TENNESSEE	W	42-24
Dec. 16	at Detroit	L	24-27
Dec. 23	JACKSONVILLE	L	3-33
Dec. 30	at Green Bay	L	13-24
Jan. 7	at Baltimore	L	3-19



The Vikings want Culpepper to become more of a student of the game and take control of the offense.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

career-high 57 passes and made the Pro Bowl last season, has developed into a solid receiving option. Having Chamberlain on the field forces defenses to stay in their base attack and helps stretch the field. With Kleinsasser moving back to tight end from fullback and Hunter Goodwin providing extra blocking, Chamberlain will be able to stay on the field more and might catch even

more passes this season. **GRADE: B**
Line—Tice still considers himself an offensive line coach. So expect this unit to receive a great deal of attention.

The line will get an instant boost from the double-tight end set, which will serve as the base offense. Kleinsasser and/or Goodwin should be on the field, acting as extra linemen, in almost every situation. There even

will be times when the Vikings will use three tight ends, taking advantage of both Kleinsasser's and Goodwin's supreme blocking talents. That's an extra 550 pounds of help. The line received its biggest boost on April 20, when the Vikings used the seventh overall pick to draft Bryant McKinnie, the massive left tackle from Miami (Fla.). McKinnie, who already has been penciled in as a starter, never allowed a sack as a college player. He needs to improve as a run blocker.

The Vikings' best lineman, and the focal point of the unit, is center Matt Birk, a former sixth-round pick who has made the Pro Bowl in both of his seasons as a starter. In 2000, when the team had star bookend tackles Todd Steussie and Korey Stringer, Birk was able to pull (his specialty) and play outside. In 2001, though, Birk was forced to stay home and help the guards. With the presence of McKinnie, Birk should be to pull again, which will make the offense better.

Mammoth guard David Dixon and tackle Chris Liwienski are a physical tandem on the right side. Dixon is a mauler who needs to improve his footwork. Liwienski, a former guard, filled the vacancy left by Stringer's death last year and is growing into the position. Left guard Corbin Lacina is a solid journeyman but is starting to age.

The top reserves are Everett Lindsay, who can play either guard or tackle and also is the No. 3 center, and Cory Withrow, a guard/center who moves well. **GRADE: B-**

DEFENSE Line—This long has been an area of major disappointment in Minnesota, and even the use of several high draft picks in recent years hasn't helped. The team hopes free agents can provide the boost the draft has not.

The Vikings imported left end Kenny Mixon and right end Lorenzo Bromell from the Dolphins in the offseason. Mixon will be expected to stuff the run, and Bromell will be asked to rush the passer. Because he'll be the Vikings' primary pass rusher, Bromell, who had 21½ sacks in four seasons with the Dolphins, may register double-digit sacks in his first year in Minnesota.

The player who benefits most from the arrival of the two ex-Dolphins may be tackle Chris Hovan, who played well in his first two seasons despite often being double-teamed and not receiving a lot of help. Now Hovan can work on collapsing the middle and stopping the run.

The only opening on the line is at nose tackle, where Fred Robbins and Darius Holland figure to rotate. Robbins is a third-year player trying to elevate his game, and Holland, an eight-year journeyman, will be trying to resurrect his.

It will be interesting to see what kind of impact new position coach O'Leary, the former Georgia Tech coach and Tice's mentor, has on this unit. **GRADE: B**

Linebackers—On a team full of lineup changes and philosophy changes, this

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-7	Bryant McKinnie	OT	Miami (Fla.)	Instant starter at left tackle and a cornerstone for the future.
2-38	Raonall Smith	LB	Washington State	Needs to get better against the run but can make plays.
3-70	Willie Offord	DB	South Carolina	Known as a good tackler, something this team can use.
4-105	Brian Williams	DB	North Carolina St.	Spent two seasons at safety, then two at corner at N.C. State.
4-132	Ed Ta'Amu	G	Utah	Vikings feel he has the strength to develop into a future starter.
6-177	Nick Rogers	LB	Georgia Tech	College end is projected to be a pass-rushing linebacker.
7-218	Chad Beasley	DT	Virginia Tech	Needs a lot of work but has a chance to make the roster.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-20	Dwayne Rudd	LB	Alabama	Starter with Browns
'98-21	Randy Moss	WR	Marshall	Starter with Vikings
'99-11	Daunte Culpepper	QB	Central Florida	Starter with Vikings
'99-29	Dimitrios Underwood	DE	Michigan State	Unsigned free agent
'00-25	Chris Hovan	DT	Boston College	Starter with Vikings
'01-27	Michael Bennett	RB	Wisconsin	Starter with Vikings

position is under the most construction. All three positions will feature new starters, and there's even a new position coach, Baker, who moves from the defensive line. Baker, known for having one of the most intense and innovative young defensive minds in the league, has full control of a position that in previous years had both outside and inside linebacker coaches.

The central piece of the new ensemble is Henri Crockett, acquired in free agency from Atlanta. He can play both on the weak side and in the middle, but both he and the team feel he is better suited for the middle.

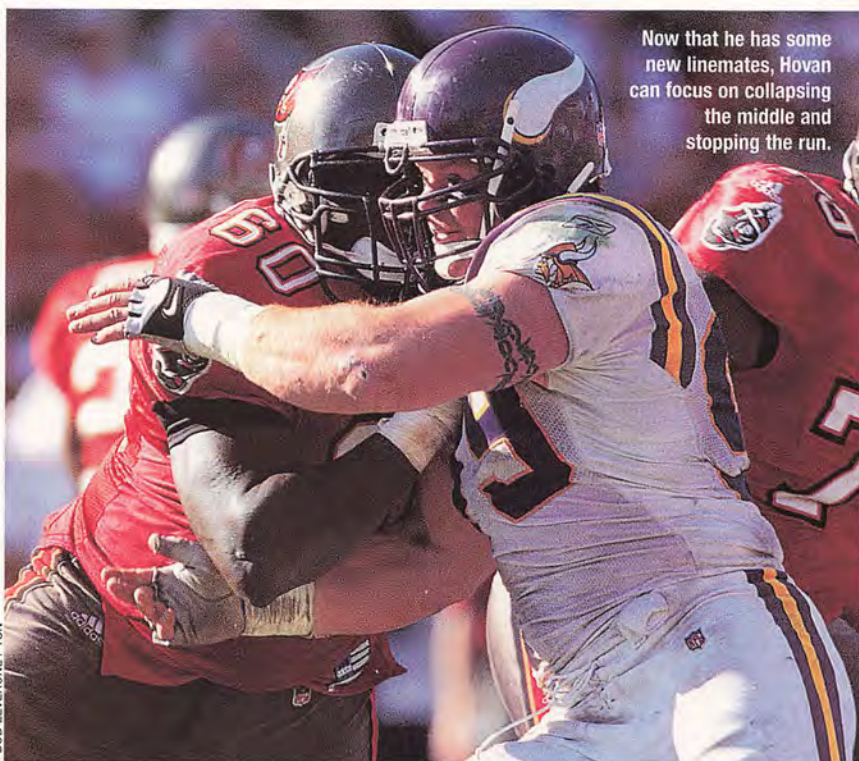
On the outside, Lemanski Hall will switch

units in front of it do. That's why his players must be fast and able to pack a punch. The two defensive backs the Vikings took in the 2002 draft—strong safety Willie Offord (third round) and free safety Brian Williams (fourth)—fit Shaw's profile: They run, they're strong and they hit. And they might wind up starting as rookies.

Offord will compete against free-agent pickup Ronnie Bradford, a starter at safety or cornerback with Atlanta the last five years. Williams, a converted cornerback, will compete for the free safety spot made vacant by the release of Orlando Thomas.

At cornerback, Corey Chavous, signed as

Now that he has some new linemates, Hovan can focus on collapsing the middle and stopping the run.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

from the strong side to the weak side, where he will be strongly challenged by second-round draft choice Raonall Smith. Second-year player Patrick Chukwurah will move back to his natural strongside position from defensive end. Though this isn't an experienced bunch, the team is counting on its athleticism to carry it over the rough spots. Crockett and Smith are superb tacklers, and Chukwurah, though raw, has the potential to become a pass-rushing terror.

Like Shaw, Baker believes in stopping the run and being aggressive. This is not the most talented group of linebackers in the league, but expect it to be well coached and well prepared. **GRADE: D**

Secondary—Shaw is the defensive coordinator, but coaching the secondary is his passion. He's putting his prints all over this unit.

That means the defensive backs will be stronger, faster and better at tackling than in past years. Shaw believes the prime objective of a secondary is to react to what the two

a free agent from the Cardinals, will play on the left side, replacing Dale Carter. The only returning starter in the secondary will be right cornerback Eric Kelly, who is entering his second season.

This group is very young, very inexperienced and undoubtedly will have some major growing pains. But all four of the projected starters fit the Shaw mold. And Shaw thinks position coach Chuck Knox Jr. quickly can whip them into a cohesive unit. **GRADE: D+**

SPECIAL TEAMS After eight years under Gary Zauner, the special teams have been turned over to Jay Hayes, who was fired in Pittsburgh after a disastrous performance by his unit against the Patriots in last season's AFC title game.

Hayes will begin his Minnesota tenure with a new punter, Kyle Richardson, and a new kicker, Doug Brien. Richardson replaces former Pro Bowl punter Mitch Berger, who was released in a salary-cap move, and Brien

Moves

Key additions

KR David Allen	Free agent
WR D'Wayne Bates	Free agent/Bears
SS Ronnie Bradford	Free agent/Falcons
K Doug Brien	Free agent/Buccaneers
DE Lorenzo Bromell	Free agent/Dolphins
CB Corey Chavous	Free agent/Cardinals
LB Henri Crockett	Free agent/Falcons
WR Sean Dawkins	Free agent/Jaguars
TE Hunter Goodwin	Free agent/Dolphins
DT Darius Holland	Free agent
TE Johnny McWilliams	Free agent
DE Kenny Mixon	Free agent/Dolphins
P Kyle Richardson	Free agent/Ravens
DE Chuck Wiley	Free agent/Falcons
RB Moe Williams	Free agent/Ravens

Key losses

K Gary Anderson	Free agent
OL Brad Badger	Free agent/Raiders
P Mitch Berger	Free agent/Rams
WR Cris Carter	Free agent
CB Dale Carter	Free agent/Saints
DE Stalin Colinet	Free agent/Jaguars
S Robert Griffith	Free agent/Browns
LB Ed McDaniel	Free agent
RB Travis Prentice	Free agent/Texans
WR Jake Reed	Free agent/Saints
FS Orlando Thomas	Free agent
WR Troy Walters	Free agent
LB Kailee Wong	Free agent/Texans

Stadium/Media

Metrodome (64,121, artificial).

Ticket information: 612-338-4537.

Training site: Minnesota State University-Mankato, Mankato, Minn.; 952-828-6500.

Radio: KFAN-AM (1130).

Website: www.vikings.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 5-11 (4th in NFC Central); 3-5 in division; 4-8 in conference; 1-3 vs. AFC; 5-3 at home; 0-8 on road; 5-6 on artificial turf; 0-5 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Mike Tice's regular-season record: 0-1 in one season with Vikings.

Tice's postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 50-30 (.625, ranks T3rd in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*324.1	6	12
Rushing offense	*100.6	11	25
Passing offense	*223.5	4	7
Scoring offense	290	11	24
Total defense	*354.1	12	27
Rushing defense	*143.7	14	30
Passing defense	*210.4	8	18
Scoring defense	390	12	26
Takeaways	18	15	31
Giveaways	39	14	30
Turnover differential	-21	15	31
Sacks	30	11	27
Sacks allowed	47	T11	T24

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Mike Tice	Head coach	7	7
George O'Leary	Asst. head coach/def. line	3	1
Scott Linehan	Offensive coordinator	1	1
Willie Shaw	Def. coord./secondary	15	2
Charlie Baggett	Wide receivers	6	3
Brian Baker	Linebackers	7	2
Pete Bercich	Def. asst./quality control	1	1
Dean Dalton	Running backs	4	4
Jay Hayes	Special teams	4	1
Chuck Knox Jr.	Defensive backfield	10	3
Daryl Lawrence	Asst. strength & cond.	3	3
Steve Loney	Offensive line	1	1
Jim Panagos	Off. asst./quality control	1	1
John Tice	Tight ends/asst. off. line	4	4
Steve Wetzel	Strength & conditioning	13	11
Alex Wood	Quarterbacks	4	4

REALIGNMENT reality

The NFC North will be a tidy little division again. Basically, it goes back to the old NFC Central days of the Vikings, Packers, Bears and Lions, before Tampa Bay joined the division in 1977. With the Buccaneers gone, these traditional rivals can try to re-create the old Black and Blue days. In addition to not having to leave the Midwest for a division game, the Vikings should benefit from not having to play a game at strong Tampa Bay every year—though they do play a conference game there this season. The Vikings have lost six of their last seven games in Tampa and have been outscored, 82-27 in their last two visits. The departure of Tampa Bay actually helps all of the teams in the division, because the Bucs have qualified for the playoffs in four of the last five years and figure to be contenders again. Instead of worrying about the Bucs, the Vikings can focus on overcoming Chicago and Green Bay.



McKinnie was a Viking for about, oh, 30 seconds before he was penciled in as a starter.

takes over for Gary Anderson. Brien also will handle kickoffs, something that Berger previously was responsible for. The long snapper is expected to be Brody Heffner-Liddiard.

The team is excited about the signing of kick returner David Allen, who starred in that role in college. Allen, who was cut by the 49ers last August and has yet to play in an NFL game, will get the chance to be the team's primary punt returner and will share the kickoff-return duties with reserve cornerback Robert Tate. The bright spot on special teams is the coverage units. The return of free agents Chris Walsh and Harold Morrow will help ensure coverage remains top-notch. **GRADE: C-**

BOTTOM LINE It's unrealistic to expect the Vikings to reach the playoffs considering the coaching change and all of the roster adjustments. However, they will be energized and could take a solid step on their way back. Tice will instill a disciplined-yet-fun atmosphere as the Vikings improve.

TSN

Bill Williamson covers the Vikings for the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Randy Moss
	□ Kenny Clark
LT	■ Bryant McKinnie
	□ Lewis Kelly
LG	■ Corbin Lacinia
	■ Everett Lindsay
C	● Matt Birk
	■ Cory Withrow
RG	■ David Dixon
	□ Ed Ta'amu
RT	■ Chris Lwinski
	□ Brian Crawford
TE	■ Jim Kleinsasser
	□ Hunter Goodwin
TE	■ Byron Chamberlain
	□ Johnny McWilliams
WR	□ D'Wayne Bates
	□ Sean Dawkins
QB	● Daunte Culpepper
	■ Todd Bouman
RB	■ Michael Bennett
	□ Doug Chapman

Defense

LE	■ Kenny Mixon
	□ Lance Johnstone
DT	□ Fred Robbins
	□ Darius Holland
DT	● Chris Hovan
	□ Winfield Garnett
RE	■ Lorenzo Bromell
	□ Talance Sawyer
OLB	□ Patrick Chukwurah
	□ Antonio Wilson
MLB	■ Henri Crockett
	□ Nick Rogers
OLB	■ Raonall Smith
	□ Lemanski Hall
LCB	■ Corey Chavous
	□ Kenny Wright
RCB	■ Eric Kelly
	□ Robert Tate
SS	■ Ronnie Bradford
	□ Willie Offord
FS	□ Brian Williams
	□ Carey Scott

Specialists

K	■ Doug Brien
P	■ Kyle Richardson
KR	□ Robert Tate
PR	□ David Allen
LS	■ B. Heffner-Liddiard
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

VIKINGS ROSTER

No.	Name	HT/Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
8	Bouman, Todd	6-2/229	8-1-72	5	St. Cloud State	FA/97	5/3
11	Culpepper, Daunte	6-4/260	1-28-77	4	Central Florida	D1a/99	11/11
14	Miller, Romaro	6-1/195	9-12-78	1	Mississippi	FA/01	1/0
Running backs							
23	Bennett, Michael	5-9/211	8-13-78	2	Wisconsin	D1/01	13/13
34	Chapman, Doug	5-10/213	8-22-77	3	Marshall	D3/00	16/3
40	Kleinsasser, Jim (FB)	6-3/274	1-31-77	4	North Dakota	D2/99	11/11
30	Williams, Moe	6-1/210	7-26-74	7	Kentucky	FA/02	15/2
Receivers							
82	Bates, D'Wayne	6-2/215	12-4-75	4	Northwestern	W-Chi/02	11/1
87	Chamberlain, Byron (TE)	6-1/264	10-17-71	6	Wayne State (Neb.)	UFA/01	16/15
86	Dawkins, Sean	6-4/218	2-3-71	10	California	UFA/02	16/3
83	Goodwin, Hunter (TE)	6-5/270	10-10-72	7	Texas A&M	FA/02	16/10
43	Heffner-Liddiard, B. (TE)	6-4/250	6-12-77	2	Colorado	FA/01	16/0
13	James, Cedric	6-1/199	3-19-79	2	Texas Christian	D4b/01	—
84	Moss, Randy	6-4/204	2-13-77	5	Marshall	D1/98	16/16
	Tice, Mike (TE)	6-7/253	2-2-59	R	Maryland	—	—
81	Walsh, Chris	6-1/199	12-12-68	10	Stanford	FA/94	16/0
Offensive linemen							
78	Birk, Matt (C)	6-4/308	7-23-76	5	Harvard	D6/98	16/16
71	Dixon, David (G)	6-5/359	1-5-69	9	Arizona State	FA/94	15/14
61	Kelly, Lewis (G)	6-4/306	4-21-77	3	South Carolina State	D7c/00	4/0
63	Lacinia, Corbin (G)	6-4/314	11-2-70	9	Augustana (S.D.)	FA/99	11/10
62	Lindsay, Everett	6-4/302	9-18-70	9	Mississippi	T-Cle/01	16/8
76	Lwinski, Chris (G)	6-5/321	8-2-75	3	Indiana	FA/99	16/16
74	McKinnie, Bryant (T)	6-8/343	9-23-79	R	Miami	D1/02	—
75	Ta'amu, Ed (G)	6-1/335	11-8-79	R	Utah	D4b/02	—
60	Withrow, Cory (C)	6-2/281	4-5-75	3	Washington State	FA/99	16/1
Defensive linemen							
65	Beasley, Chad (T)	6-5/303	11-13-78	R	Virginia Tech	D7/02	—
94	Bromell, Lorenzo (E)	6-6/268	9-23-75	5	Clemson	UFA/02	16/1
92	Garnett, Winfield	6-6/320	7-24-76	2	Ohio State	FA/01	12/2
90	Hazuga, Jeff	6-5/277	4-29-78	2	Wisconsin-Stout	FA/01	3/0
99	Hovan, Chris (T)	6-2/294	5-12-78	4	Boston College	D1/00	16/16
91	Howard, Willie (E)	6-3/298	12-26-77	2	Stanford	D2/01	8/0
51	Johnstone, Lance (E)	6-4/253	6-11-73	7	Temple	FA/01	16/5
79	Mixon, Kenny (E)	6-4/275	5-31-75	5	Louisiana State	UFA/02	16/16
98	Robbins, Fred (T)	6-4/313	3-25-77	3	Wake Forest	D2a/00	16/12
97	Sawyer, Talance (E)	6-2/270	6-14-76	4	UNLV	D6a/99	16/16
	Wiley, Chuck (E)	6-5/277	3-6-75	4	Louisiana State	UFA/02	16/1
Linebackers							
50	Chukwurah, Patrick	6-1/238	3-1-79	2	Wyoming	D5/01	16/3
55	Hall, Lemanski	6-0/235	11-24-70	8	Alabama	UFA/00	16/12
56	Nelson, Jim	6-1/234	4-16-75	4	Penn State	W-GB/00	16/2
59	O'Neal, Andre	6-1/235	12-12-75	3	Marshall	FA/01	9/2
58	Rogers, Nick	6-2/251	5-31-79	R	Georgia Tech	D6/02	—
57	Smith, Raonall	6-2/244	10-22-78	R	Washington State	D2/02	—
54	Wilson, Antonio	6-2/247	12-29-77	3	Tex. A&M-Commerce	D4a/00	10/0
Defensive backs							
	Bradford, Ronnie (S)	5-10/198	10-1-70	10	Colorado	FA/02	14/14
22	Carter, Tyrone (S)	5-8/190	3-31-76	3	Minnesota	D4b/00	15/7
25	Kelly, Eric (CB)	5-10/197	1-15-77	2	Kentucky	D3/01	16/11
31	Morgan, Don (S)	5-11/202	9-18-75	2	Nevada-Reno	FA/99	16/2
24	Offord, Willie (S)	6-1/215	12-22-78	R	South Carolina	D3/02	—
41	Scott, Carey (CB)	5-11/207	8-11-78	2	Kentucky State	D6/01	—
28	Tate, Robert (CB)	5-10/193	10-19-73	6	Cincinnati	D6/97	16/5
29	Williams, Brian (CB)	5-11/207	7-2-79	R	North Carolina State	D4a/02	—
Specialists							
4	Brien, Doug (K)	6-0/180	11-24-70	9	California	UFA/02	3/0
5	Richardson, Kyle (P)	6-2/210	3-2-73	6	Arkansas State	UFA/02	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: TE Matt Cercone, OT Brian Crawford, DT Darius Holland, G Mike Malano, TE Johnny McWilliams.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.

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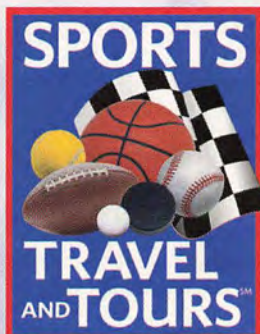
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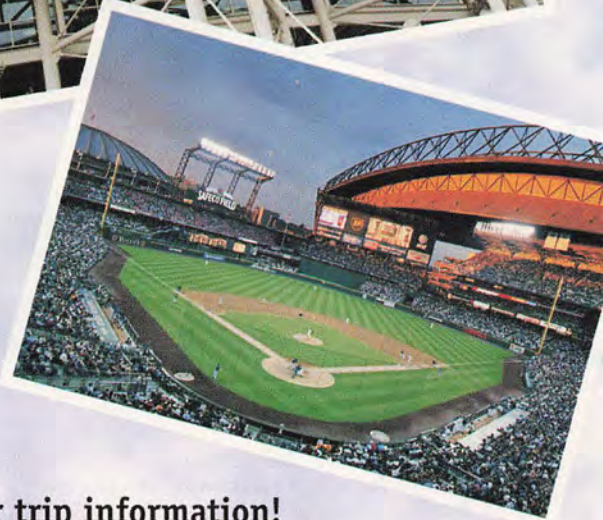
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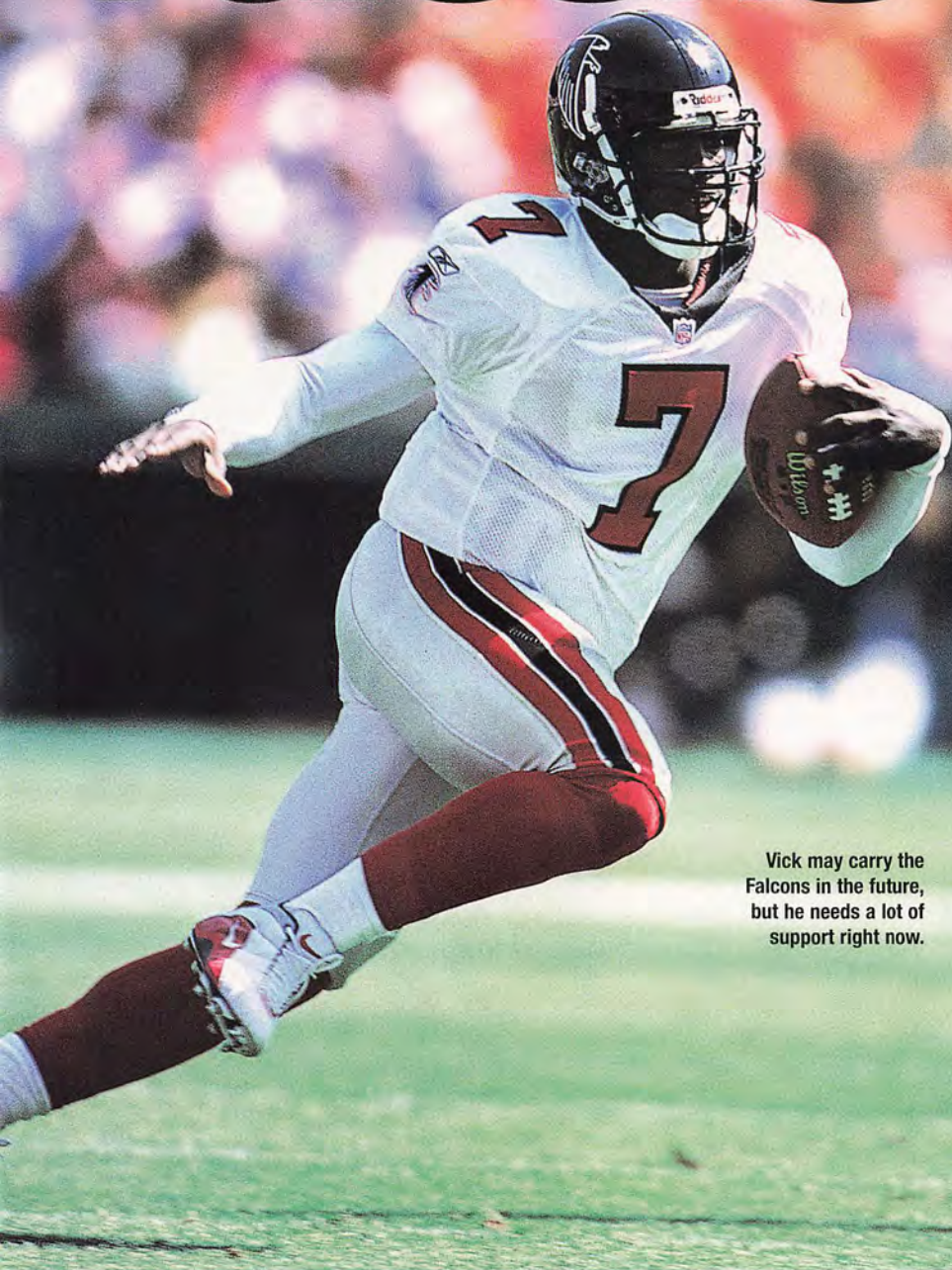
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Falcons



Vick may carry the Falcons in the future, but he needs a lot of support right now.

BY CHARLES ODUM

Leave it to The Home Depot's co-founder to be the architect of the Falcons' remodeling effort. Arthur Blank's ownership of the team was approved by the league in January, but the big changes will be on the field. There will be at least seven new starters on offense—including a new quarterback and running back. On defense, there's a new coordinator who is installing a new scheme.

The most significant makeover takes place

under center. The exit of Chris Chandler signaled the coronation of Michael Vick as the team's new leader, in just his second season. Vick and free-agent running back Warrick Dunn will provide much-needed speed. After 10 years in the Georgia Dome, the offense finally looks like it was made for artificial turf.

Behind Vick, rookie first-round pick T.J. Duckett will replace Jamal Anderson as the power back and serve as a nice complement to the shifty Dunn.

A commitment to improving the NFL's 30th-ranked defense came when new coordinator Wade Phillips was awarded what briefly was the highest pay for any assistant in the league—\$3 million for two years. Phillips will change to a 3-4 defense.

There have been other encouraging signs around the organization. Blank added Joe Gibbs as a minority owner, and he hired Bobby Beathard as a senior adviser. He also attempted to bring in another top football mind, former Packers boss Ron Wolf, as general manager. Look for those talks to resume by the end of the year.

COACHING Strategies—Coach Dan Reeves' offensive system thrived in 1998, but more often in his five years in Atlanta the unit has struggled. A common problem has been the inability to overcome the loss of Anderson to injuries. So Reeves made running back his top offseason priority, and Dunn was signed and Duckett drafted. Now Reeves should have a more consistent and versatile ground game to complement Vick. In the future, Vick might be able to carry the team, but right now he needs plenty of support.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	at Green Bay	1:00	Nov. 10	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Sept. 15	CHICAGO	1:00	Nov. 17	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Sept. 22	CINCINNATI	8:30	Nov. 24	at Carolina	1:00
Sept. 29	Open date		Dec. 1	at Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 6	TAMPA BAY	1:00	Dec. 8	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 13	at N.Y. Giants	1:00	Dec. 15	SEATTLE	1:00
Oct. 20	CAROLINA	1:00	Dec. 22	DETROIT	1:00
Oct. 27	at New Orleans	1:00	Dec. 29	at Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 3	BALTIMORE	1:00	Strength of schedule: 30th		

Reeves plans to spread the field and simplify the offense for Vick. For the first time in his coaching career, Reeves is attempting to shorten the terminology in his playbook to give Vick less to worry about at the line.

Look for Dunn to touch the ball 15 to 25 times a game, often as a receiver. Also expect Vick to make better use of tight ends Alge Crumpler, Reggie Kelly and Brian Kozlowski. They all have good hands and must be utilized.

This will be a run-first offense as long as Reeves is in charge. The difference is Vick, who also is a major threat to run and will give teams a different dimension to worry about.

Phillips brings an attacking style that attempts to utilize the strength of the defense—the speed and athleticism of ends Patrick Kerney and John Thierry and linebackers Keith Brooking, Chris Draft and Mark Simoneau. Reeves places a lot of trust in the returning talent on defense. He also trusts Phillips to find the best way to utilize it.

Style—The retirement of running backs coach George Sefcik gave Reeves the opportunity to bring in a true offensive coordinator, but Reeves will go without and

BOB LEVEORNE / TSN

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

If **Dan Reeves** doesn't change the verbiage in his play-calling system, it will be very difficult for **Michael Vick** to deal with it. It is a cumbersome, complex system, not one that a young quarterback can come in and pick up easily. How fast Vick progresses will be related to whether they choose to simplify it or cut it down some. ... They took some heat in the media for drafting **T.J. Duckett** (No. 1) as opposed to a wide receiver. My opinion is that with Duckett and **Warrick Dunn**, they have solidified the running game. And that in itself takes a whole bunch of heat off of Vick. ... The area where there are some questions is wideout. **Shawn Jefferson** is 33 and **Brian Finneran** is limited; he's not a pure speed guy. They signed **Jeff Graham**,



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

OUTSIDE

Jefferson

VIEW

THE FALCONS

which filled a need for a veteran receiver, but they still haven't filled their need for speed. ... I think their defensive line is solid. I don't think you have a guy who's a dominant sacker, but I think they have a good, solid line. ... They've got an outstanding linebacker in **Keith Brooking** and a solid one in **Chris Draft**. Beyond that, there's a bunch of question marks. They're talking about going to a 3-4. Now it might evolve to where they'll be better than I think they are at this point, but I'm not sure you would say they have four linebackers who are quality starters. ... They've got pretty good corners (**Ray Buchanan**, **Ashley Ambrose**), but they've rotated their safeties in and out. I don't know that they've solved it and said, "Here's a solid guy or a potential Pro Bowler."

call the plays himself. Last season, Sefcik held the coordinator title, but quarterbacks coach Jack Burns called the plays from the press box through Reeves.

Reeves' offenses have been accused of being too predictable. That might change with Vick on the field. But if Reeves limits Vick with too many conservative calls, the old criticisms will resurface.

Phillips returns to the game after a one-year break. He fared so well as defensive coordinator in Denver and Buffalo that he became the coach with each team. Phillips wants his defense to be more attacking; he says there will be no prevent defenses if the Falcons are holding a late lead. A tactician, Phillips is known for his patience and loyalty.

Reeves appreciates loyalty from his assistants and, after hiring Phillips once in Denver, he did not hesitate to renew the relationship.

GRADE: B

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Vick will be exciting. For Reeves, that is not all good. A key for Vick will be improved fundamentals. As a rookie, he was prone to hold the ball out with one hand on scrambles and was an easy target to be stripped.

Vick showed increased confidence throughout last season. In a December relief effort against the Dolphins, he accounted for 277 of the team's 388 total yards. He turned apparent sacks into runs of 23 and 30 yards. The following week at St. Louis, however, he was sacked seven times and lost two fumbles. There might be more uneven progress ahead, but Reeves knows it's time to give Vick a chance. Vick has been a regular at the team's practice facility in the offseason, and his weight-room work shows in added muscle to his already cut upper body. Vick will need the added muscle if he is to endure a full season on the run.

The only backup with experience is Doug Johnson, a third-year pro with two career starts. Rookie Kurt Kittner is next in line.

Adding a veteran safety net would have been smart, but Reeves says he is comfortable with Johnson.

GRADE: C+

Running backs—The surprise of the offseason was the selection of Duckett instead of a deep-threat

wide receiver in the first round. Duckett follows William Andrews, Gerald Riggs, Craig Heyward and Anderson in the line of Falcons power backs, but Duckett is more than a between-the-tackles runner. He boasts good speed and lowers his pads, providing a low target for tacklers, much like Anderson. Now the Falcons don't have to wonder if Anderson can make a comeback from his second reconstructive knee surgery in three years.

Dunn and Duckett will share most of the

carries, and Maurice Smith, also returning from surgery to repair torn knee cartilage, should be ready if needed. Smith was impressive early as Anderson's fill-in, but his production dipped dramatically when he tried to play with the bad knee. Before the injury, Smith showed excellent breakaway speed, and he should not be discarded.

Fullback Bob Christian deserved Pro Bowl consideration last year. He averaged 6.5 yards a carry and caught 45 passes while supplying his usual dependable blocking.

George Layne is being trained to eventually replace Christian.

GRADE: B

Receivers—After cutting Tony Martin and Terance Mathis, the team seemed certain to add a high draft pick at receiver. Instead, soon after the draft, it signed veteran Jeff

Graham, who is coming off three 50-catch seasons with the Chargers but dropped too many passes last year. Graham, 33, still has good speed, but he's a short-term answer.

The team was expected to sign another receiver before camp, but former backups Brian Finneran and Shawn Jefferson still should have significant roles. It was only through Reeves' loyalty to Mathis, Martin and Jefferson that Finneran did not start last

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. TE Alge Crumpler will compete for the team lead in receptions, a reflection of his talent and the lack of a go-to wide receiver.
2. QB Michael Vick won't rank in the top five in the NFC in passer rating, but he will inject needed excitement with his scrambles and ability to improvise.
3. Wade Phillips will be considered for NFL assistant of the year honors when the defense improves dramatically. Of course, it helps St. Louis no longer is on the schedule.
4. RB Warrick Dunn won't be satisfied if he averages 10 to 15 carries instead of 15 to 20. That could happen because of the impact of rookie T.J. Duckett. Still, Dunn should post big all-purpose numbers, leading the team in rushing while ranking among the top receivers.
5. Ron Wolf will be hired as general manager by the end of the year.



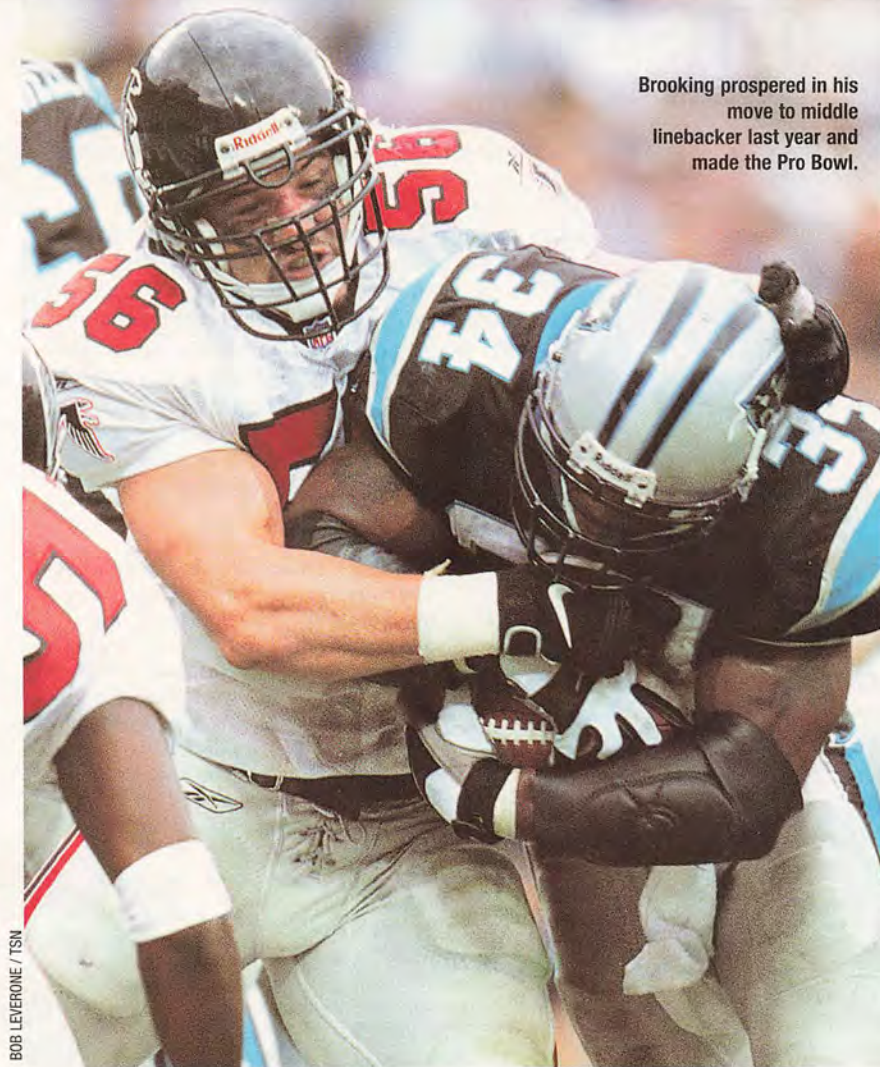
Crumpler

2001 results

Sept. 9	at San Fran. (OT)	L	13-16
Sept. 23	CAROLINA	W	24-16
Sept. 30	at Arizona	W	34-14
Oct. 7	CHICAGO	L	3-31
Oct. 14	SAN FRAN. (OT)	L	31-37
Oct. 21	at New Orleans	W	20-13
Oct. 28	Open date		
Nov. 4	NEW ENGLAND	L	10-24
Nov. 11	DALLAS	W	20-13
Nov. 18	at Green Bay	W	23-20
Nov. 25	at Carolina	W	10-7
Dec. 2	ST. LOUIS	L	6-35
Dec. 9	NEW ORLEANS	L	10-28
Dec. 16	at Indianapolis	L	27-41
Dec. 23	BUFFALO	W	33-30
Dec. 30	at Miami	L	14-21
Jan. 6	at St. Louis	L	13-31

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Brooking prospered in his move to middle linebacker last year and made the Pro Bowl.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

year when he led the team with 21.3 yards per catch. The 6-5 Finneran isn't a burner, but he has good hands and is a nice, big target. Jefferson earned respect last year with his toughness and determination to play through injuries. There will also be opportunities for rookie Kahlil Hill and second-year players Quentin McCord and Shawn Mills.

Crumpler's excellent receiving skills might help him beat out Kelly as the No. 1 tight end. In either case, both should play extensively in two-tight end sets. The underrated Kozlowski proved again last year that he also has great hands. The three combined for 56 catches and four touchdowns last year. Crumpler could match those numbers by himself soon. **GRADE: D+**

Line—Changes are coming for a unit that ranked last in the league by allowing 64 sacks.

Because Vick is lefthanded, right tackle becomes a vital position. Free-agent signee Todd Weiner is known more for his pass blocking than run blocking, and if he can help keep Vick standing, he will be a bargain at \$17.5 million for five years—a figure that shocked many observers.

Roberto Garza is moving from left guard to center, where he will compete with returning starter Todd McClure. McClure is a smart player but at times last season was overwhelmed physically. Garza is stronger.

Rookie Martin Bibla, a rookie fourth-round pick, may beat out Travis Claridge to start at left guard. Bibla was an overachiever

in college, and his durability and sound fundamentals should make a strong impression.

Claridge must be allowed to work at guard instead of tackle for a full training camp. It seems everyone in the league except Falcons coaches know Claridge is better suited for guard, but he opened his first two seasons as the starting right tackle, only to be pushed aside and expected to immediately adjust to the guard spot. This will be a crucial training camp for Claridge.

For years, left tackle Bob Whitfield has been the one sure thing on the line, but after signing a big contract, he was plagued by penalties and appeared to play down to the level of the other starters last season.

Whitfield may not have responded well to line coach Pete Mangurian's mandate for leaner, quicker linemen. **GRADE: C-**

DEFENSE Line—The Falcons, who this offseason re-signed Ed Jasper for five years at \$10 million, have kept their top three interior defensive linemen together for four years. Travis Hall and Shane Dronett also return, though their roles will change in the 3-4.

Jasper and Hall each have seen spot duty at end the last two seasons, and it looks like Hall will have the first chance to play there in the new alignment. The shorter, thicker Jasper may be better suited to play nose tackle, where he'll likely back up Dronett.

On the outside, last season was a crucial breakthrough for left end Patrick Kerney, who led the team with 12 sacks. Kerney was on the verge of looking like a first-round bust. Instead, he now ranks only slightly behind linebacker Keith Brooking as a foundation player for the future. Kerney and Brady Smith, who had eight sacks last year, are too small to be ideal 3-4 ends, and it still is possible Phillips could determine the best 11 starters fit better in the four-man defensive front. Either way, Kerney seems certain to be the team's designated pass-rush leader. In a 4-3, he would stay at left end. In a 3-4, he would play the rush linebacker position and perhaps enjoy even more success.

In a 3-4, Smith may be the odd man out

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-18	T.J. Duckett	RB	Michigan State	Big, strong and fast, he's the answer to team's short-yardage woes.
3-80	Will Overstreet	LB	Tennessee	Will compete for playing time as the rush linebacker in new 3-4.
4-116	Martin Bibla	G	Miami (Fla.)	Durable player has a chance to open season as a starter.
5-148	Kevin McCadam	DB	Virginia Tech	Has a chance to start at safety, but big special teams role is more likely.
5-158	Kurt Kittner	QB	Illinois	Has solid mechanics but doesn't run well and has only an average arm.
6-184	Kahlil Hill	WR	Iowa	Should play as rookie, but no one expects him to start.
7-217	Michael Coleman	WR	Widener	Good size, speed and quickness but hasn't faced top competition.
7-244	Kevin Shaffer	OT	Tulsa	Will compete for backup job behind starting RT Todd Weiner.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-11	Michael Booker	DB	Nebraska	Unsigned free agent
'98-12	Keith Brooking	LB	Georgia Tech	Starter with Falcons
'99-30	Patrick Kerney	DE	Virginia	Starter with Falcons
'00	None			
'01-1	Michael Vick	QB	Virginia Tech	Starter with Falcons

or may simply be a specialist on passing downs. Jasper often dominates in training camp but seems to disappear when playing behind Hall and Dronett. The exception was 2000. If he is a full-time starter—either at nose tackle or end—Jasper could be a breakthrough player in the new defense.

GRADE: C+

Linebackers—One key to the defense will be second-year player Matt Stewart, who will have the first opportunity to replace departed free agent Henri Crockett at strongside linebacker. If Stewart shows he can start, efforts to fill the other spots on the front seven will be much easier.

Rookie third-round pick Will Overstreet,

Falcons seem to be well-stocked for the move to a 3-4. Last year was Brooking's chance to emerge as a rising star. If Kerney is the rush linebacker, he could take the biggest step this season. **GRADE: A-**

Secondary—For all the fuss made about the need for a deep threat at wide receiver, safety ranked as a close second on the team's offseason wish list. Ronnie Bradford was not re-signed, leaving a hole at free safety. And Gerald McBurrows' hold on the strong safety spot is shaky.

Former Rams starter Keith Lyle and former Bills starter Keion Carpenter were signed to compete at free safety. Johnndale Carty could be a preseason surprise at strong safety, and if he plays well enough it is possible McBurrows could move to free safety.

Cornerback Ray Buchanan struggled at times last year after a standout 2000 season.

Buchanan shared the team lead with five interceptions, but he was burned for too many big plays. Buchanan was hurt by the poor support he received from the safeties and by his own bad decisions while free-lancing in coverage.

Ashley Ambrose delivered another solid season last year and works well with Buchanan. The friends have a healthy competition for bragging rights as top dog at cornerback. They need to push each other so the unit improves its No. 30 ranking in pass defense. If Buchanan returns to 2000 form under the direction

of Phillips and new secondary coach Emmitt Thomas, cornerback could again be a team strength.

Two key moves were made to improve the play of the nickel and dime backs. Allen Rossum and Fred Weary each signed three-year deals and will make third-year cornerback Darrick Vaughn work to keep his roster spot.

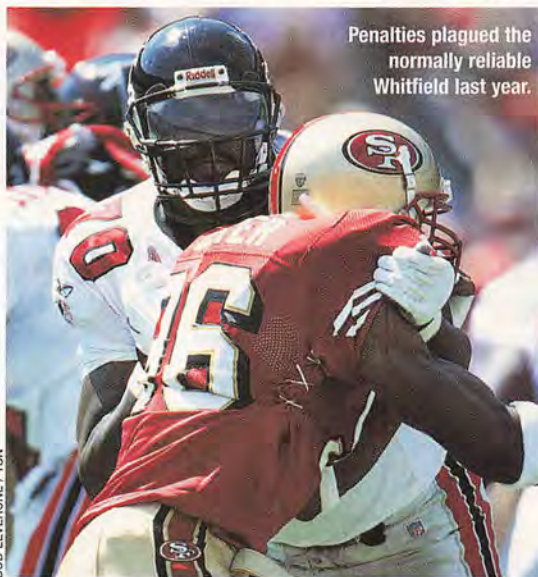
Even with the problems at nickel back and at safety, there was enough talent to have better production last year, especially because the team enjoyed an improved pass rush. Phillips and Thomas should be more successful in delivering a fundamentally sound unit. **GRADE: C**

SPECIAL TEAMS

The one area that consistently provided a winning grade last season was special teams. Assistant coach Joe DeCamillis managed to withstand the losses of kicker Morten Andersen and punter Dan Stryzinski and not miss a beat. Depth at linebacker led to coverage teams loaded with big hitters, including Artie Ulmer, Stewart, Simoneau and running back Travis Jervey.

The special teams were eighth in the NFL in kickoff coverage, sixth in punt coverage, first in punt returns and 10th in kickoff

Penalties plagued the normally reliable Whitfield last year.



Moves

Key additions

S Keion Carpenter	Free agent/Bills
RB Warrick Dunn	Free agent/Buccaneers
WR Jeff Graham	Free agent/Chargers
LB John Holecsek	Free agent/Chargers
S Keith Lyle	Free agent/Redskins
WR Travis McGriff	Free agent/Broncos
CB Allen Rossum	Free agent/Packers
DE John Thierry	Free agent/Packers
CB Fred Weary	Free agent/Saints
OT Todd Weiner	Free agent/Seahawks
WR Alvis Whitted	Free agent/Jaguars

Key losses

FS Ronnie Bradford	Free agent/Vikings
QB Chris Chandler	Free agent/Bears
LB Henri Crockett	Free agent/Vikings
CB/PR Darrien Gordon	Free agent
G Bob Hallen	Free agent/Chargers
S/PR Chris Hudson	Free agent
LB Antony Jordan	Free agent
WR Tony Martin	Free agent
WR Terance Mathis	Free agent
OT Ephraim Salaam	Free agent/Broncos
DE Chuck Wiley	Free agent/Vikings
CB Elijah Williams	Free agent

Stadium/Media

Georgia Dome (71,228, artificial).

Ticket information: 404-223-8444.

Training site: 4400 Falcon Parkway, Flowery Branch, Ga.; 770-965-3115

Radio: WGST-AM (920).

Website: www.atlantafalcons.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 7-9 (4th in NFC West); 3-5 in division; 6-6 in conference; 1-3 vs. AFC; 3-5 at home; 4-4 on road; 4-7 on artificial turf; 3-2 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Dan Reeves' regular-season record: 37-43 in five seasons with Falcons; 178-149-1 overall in 21 seasons with Falcons, Giants and Broncos.

Reeves' postseason record: 10-8 in eight appearances with Falcons, Giants and Broncos (0-4 in Super Bowls).

Team record last five years: 37-43 (.463, ranks 20th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1998.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*316.9	7	15
Rushing offense	*110.1	7	16
Passing offense	*206.8	10	17
Scoring offense	291	10	23
Total defense	*365.3	14	30
Rushing defense	*121.4	11	21
Passing defense	*243.9	15	30
Scoring defense	377	11	24
Takeaways	30	T9	T14
Giveaways	28	T7	T13
Turnover differential	2	7	T13
Sacks	37	8	T19
Sacks allowed	64	14	30

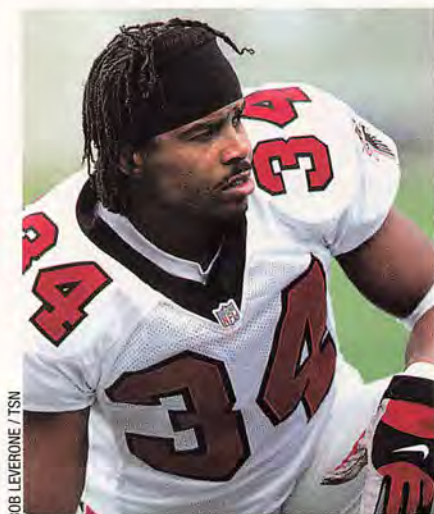
*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dan Reeves	Exec. V.P./head coach	22	6
Wade Phillips	Defensive coordinator	26	1
Dennis Allen	Defensive quality control	1	1
Marvin Bass	Asst. to HC/pro personnel	21	6
Jack Burns	Quarterbacks	11	6
Rocky Colburn	Asst. strength & condit.	4	4
James Daniel	Tight ends	10	6
Billy Davis	Linebackers	11	2
Joe DeCamillis	Special teams	12	6
Bill Johnson	Defensive line	2	2
Mike Johnson	Receivers	3	1
Pete Mangurian	Offensive line	12	3
Al Miller	Strength & conditioning	18	6
Rennie Simmons	Asst. offensive line	21	6
Gary Stevens	Offensive assistant	14	2
Emmitt Thomas	Secondary	26	1
Ed West	Off. quality control	5	5
Ollie Wilson	Running backs	12	7

REALIGNMENT reality

Miscast in the NFC West and brutalized by the 49ers and/or Rams almost every year, the Falcons should benefit from realignment as much as any team. Based just on the recent lopsided losses to the Rams, the Falcons should have a chance for two more wins every year. Against the Rams' passing game, they had no chance. Against Tampa Bay, they can at least compete. Atlanta also gets to lose the annual cross-country trip to San Francisco. St. Louis, despite its recent success, never was a good draw in Atlanta. The NFC South makes for much better natural rivalries. New Orleans always has been the team's best rival. Realignment will provide another means to attempt to boost the rivalry with Carolina. So far, neither Carolina nor Atlanta fans travel to Falcons-Panthers road games the way fans from each side make the longer trip for Falcons-Saints games.



Buchanan intercepted five passes last season, but he was burned by too many big plays.

returns. Week in and week out, they won crucial battles for field position.

Rookie Jay Feely survived a mini-slump to kick 29 field goals, the second-highest total in team history. That included a 55-yarder at Arizona. Feely also regularly produced longer kickoffs than Andersen had provided.

Veteran punter Chris Mohr struggled at times in the middle of the season but finished strong. Like Stryzinski, Mohr takes opposing return specialists out of games with his high punts.

Rossum should succeed Darrien Gordon as the punt returner, and he could push Vaughn for kickoff returns. The rookie Hill also may get a chance on returns; he excelled in that role in college. Long snapper Derek Rackley was very consistent in 2001.

GRADE: A

BOTTOM LINE The team was 6-4 last year before collapsing when it ran out of healthy running backs. The newly developed depth might be what Reeves needs to make the Falcons playoff contenders, but only with improved play from the offensive line and safeties and only if answers are found at wide receiver.

TSN

Charles Odum covers the Falcons for the Columbus (Ga.) Ledger-Enquirer.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Jeff Graham
	■ Shawn Jefferson
LT	● Bob Whitfield
	□ Dave Kadela
LG	□ Martin Bibla
	□ Travis Claridge
C	■ Roberto Garza
	■ Todd McClure
RG	■ Kynan Forney
	□ Travis Claridge
RT	■ Todd Weiner
	□ Michael Thompson
TE	● Alge Crumpler
	■ Reggie Kelly
WR	■ Brian Finneran
	□ Kahlil Hill
QB	■ Michael Vick
	□ Doug Johnson

RB	■ Warrick Dunn
	■ T.J. Duckett
FB	● Bob Christian
	□ George Layne

Defense

LE	■ Travis Hall
	■ John Thierry
NT	■ Ed Jasper
	■ Shane Dronett
RE	■ Brady Smith
	□ Fred Perry
SLB	■ Matt Stewart
	■ John Thierry
ILB	■ Chris Draft
	■ Mark Simoneau
ILB	● Keith Brooking
	■ John Holecck
RLB	■ Patrick Kerney
	■ Will Overstreet
LCB	● Ray Buchanan
	□ Allen Rossum
RCB	● Ashley Ambrose
	□ Fred Weary
SS	■ Gerald McBurrows
	□ Johndale Carty
FS	■ Keith Lyle
	□ Keion Carpenter

Specialists

K	■ Jay Feely
P	■ Chris Mohr
KR	■ Darrick Vaughn
PR	■ Allen Rossum
LS	● Derek Rackley
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

FALCONS ROSTER

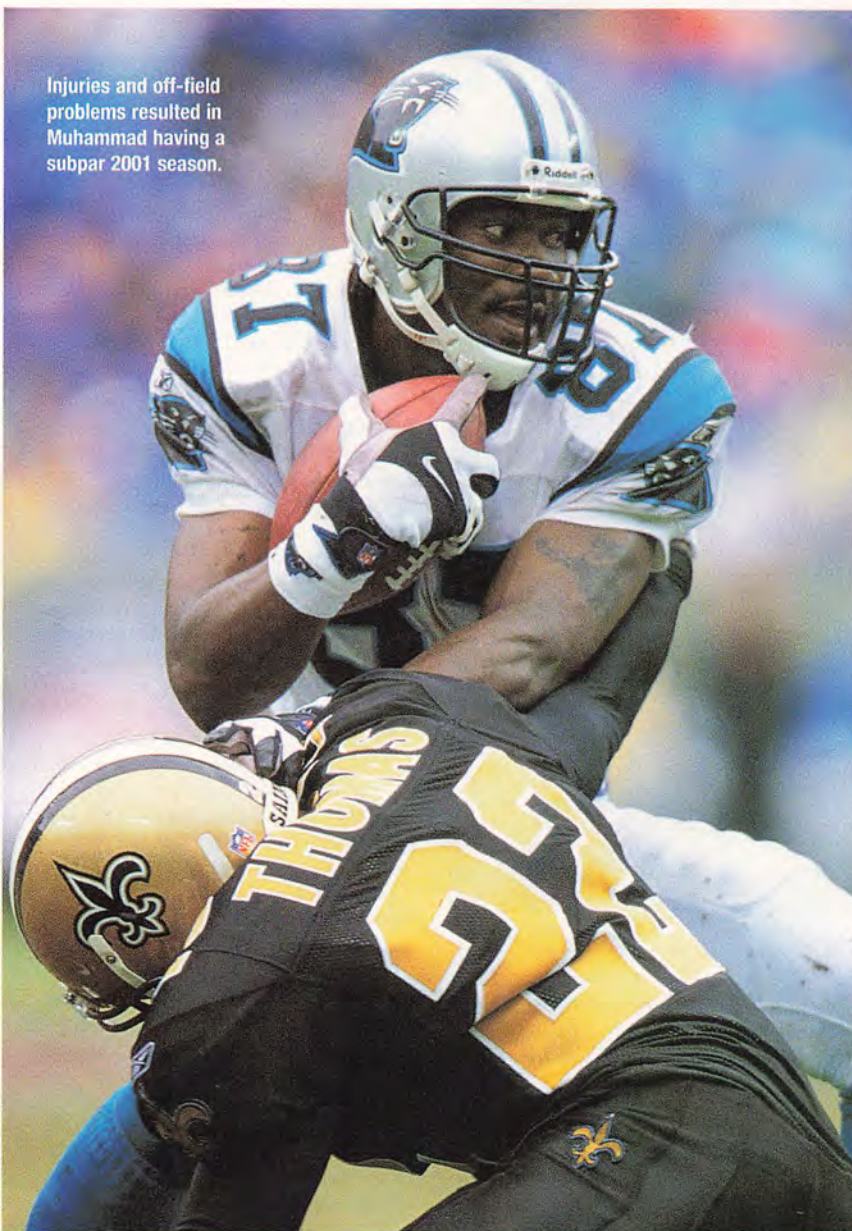
No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
11	Johnson, Doug	6-2/225	10-27-77	3	Florida	FA/00	3/0
15	Kittner, Kurt	6-2/221	1-23-80	R	Illinois	D5b/02	—
7	Vick, Michael	6-0/215	6-28-80	2	Virginia Tech	D1/01	8/2
Running backs							
32	Anderson, Jamal	5-11/173	9-30-72	9	Utah	D7/94	3/3
44	Christian, Bob (FB)	5-11/232	11-14-68	10	Northwestern	FA/97	16/8
45	Duckett, T.J.	6-0/254	2-17-81	R	Michigan State	D1/02	—
28	Dunn, Warrick	5-9/180	1-5-75	6	Florida State	UFA/02	13/12
36	Jervy, Travis	6-0/222	5-5-72	8	The Citadel	UFA/02	16/0
38	Layne, George (FB)	5-11/250	10-9-78	2	Texas Christian	FA/01	2/0
43	Smith, Maurice	6-0/235	9-7-76	3	North Carolina A & T	FA/00	16/12
20	Thomas, Rodney	5-10/210	3-30-73	8	Texas A&M	FA/01	12/0
Receivers							
18	Coleman, Michael	5-11/190	7-9-80	R	Widener	D7a/02	—
83	Crumpler, Alge (TE)	6-2/262	12-23-77	2	North Carolina	D2/01	16/12
86	Finneran, Brian	6-5/210	1-31-76	3	Villanova	FA/00	16/1
81	Graham, Jeff	6-2/206	2-14-69	12	Ohio State	FA/02	14/12
14	Hill, Kahlil	6-2/200	3-18-79	R	Iowa	D6/02	—
84	Jefferson, Shawn	5-11/185	2-22-69	12	Central Florida	UFA/00	16/6
89	Kelly, Reggie (TE)	6-3/255	2-22-77	4	Mississippi State	D2/99	14/13
85	Kozlowski, Brian (TE)	6-3/250	10-4-70	9	Connecticut	FA/97	16/0
88	McCord, Quentin	5-10/188	6-26-78	2	Kentucky	D7d/01	7/0
80	McGriff, Travis	5-8/185	6-24-76	4	Florida	D3b/99	5/0
48	Rackley, Derek (TE)	6-4/250	7-18-77	3	Minnesota	FA/00	16/0
87	Whitted, Alvis	6-0/186	9-4-74	4	North Carolina State	FA/02	11/0
Offensive linemen							
64	Bibla, Martin (G)	6-3/306	10-4-79	R	Miami (Fla.)	D4/02	—
71	Claridge, Travis (T)	6-5/300	3-23-78	3	Southern California	D2/00	14/11
65	Forney, Kynan (G)	6-2/305	9-8-78	R	Hawaii	D7/01	12/8
63	Garza, Roberto (C)	6-2/296	3-26-79	2	Texas A&M-Kingsville	D4a/01	16/4
73	Kadela, Dave (T)	6-6/294	5-6-78	1	Virginia Tech	FA/01	1/0
62	McClure, Todd (C)	6-1/286	2-16-77	4	Louisiana State	D7a/99	15/15
76	Shaffer, Kevin (T)	6-5/290	3-2-80	R	Tulsa	D7b/02	—
72	Shepherd, Gannon (T)	6-7/308	1-4-77	1	Duke	FA/01	1/0
66	Thompson, Michael (T)	6-4/295	2-11-77	3	Tennessee State	D4/00	2/1
74	Weiner, Todd (T)	6-4/297	9-16-75	5	Kansas State	UFA/02	16/13
70	Whitfield, Bob (T)	6-5/310	10-18-71	11	Stanford	D1a/92	16/16
Defensive linemen							
75	Dronett, Shane (T)	6-6/300	1-12-71	11	Texas	FA/97	15/15
92	Flemmons, Ronald (E)	6-5/265	10-20-79	R	Texas A&M	D7c/01	1/0
98	Hall, Travis (T)	6-5/295	8-3-72	8	Brigham Young	D6/95	16/16
95	Jasper, Ed (T)	6-2/293	1-18-73	6	Texas A&M	FA/99	16/1
97	Kerney, Patrick (E)	6-5/273	12-30-76	4	Virginia	D1/99	16/16
99	Moore, Ron (T)	6-2/312	8-10-77	2	NW Oklahoma State	FA/00	1/0
91	Smith, Brady (E)	6-5/274	6-5-73	7	Colorado State	UFA/00	15/15
55	Thierry, John (E)	6-4/262	9-4-71	9	Alcorn State	FA/02	12/12
Linebackers							
56	Brooking, Keith	6-2/245	10-30-75	5	Georgia Tech	D1/98	16/16
54	Draft, Chris	5-11/232	2-26-76	4	Stanford	W-SF/00	13/10
59	Holecck, John	6-2/242	5-7-72	8	Illinois	UFA/02	11/0
51	Kelly, Jeff	5-11/242	12-13-75	4	Kansas State	D6/99	0/0
90	Overstreet, Will	6-2/259	10-7-79	R	Tennessee	D3/02	—
53	Simoneau, Mark	6-0/234	1-16-77	3	Kansas State	D3/00	16/5
52	Stewart, Matt	6-3/232	8-31-79	2	Vanderbilt	D4/01	15/0
50	Ulmer, Artie	6-3/247	7-30-73	5	Valdosta (Ga.) State	FA/01	15/0
Defensive backs							
33	Ambrose, Ashley (CB)	5-10/187	9-17-70	11	Mississippi Valley St.	UFA/00	16/16
34	Buchanan, Ray (CB)	5-9/186	9-29-71	10	Louisville	FA/97	16/16
29	Carpenter, Keion (S)	5-11/205	10-31-77	4	Virginia Tech	FA/02	15/10
35	Carty, Johndale (S)	6-0/196	8-27-77	4	Utah State	D4/99	16/2
42	Hall, Corey	6-4/203	1-17-79	2	Appalachian State	D7a/01	3/0
47	Hudson, Chris (S)	5-10/199	10-6-71	7	Colorado	UFA/01	15/2
41	Lyle, Keith (S)	6-2/210	4-17-72	9	Virginia	UFA/02	16/0
22	McBurrows, Gerald (S)	5-11/208	10-7-73	8	Kansas	UFA/99	14/8
	McCadam, Kevin (S)	6-1/219	3-6-79	R	Virginia Tech	D5a/02	—
23	Rossum, Allen (CB)	5-8/178	10-22-75	5	Notre Dame	UFA/02	6/0
37	Vaughn, Darrick (CB)	5-11/193	10-2-78	3	Southwest Texas St.	D7/00	16/0
24	Weary, Fred (CB)	5-10/181	4-12-74	5	Florida	UFA/02	14/1
Specialists							
4	Feely, Jay (K)	5-10/206	5-23-76	2	Michigan	FA/01	16/0
13	Mohr, Chris (P)	6-5/215	5-11-66	13	Alabama	FA/00	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: CB Juran Bolden, LB Antico Dalton, DT Brandon Miller, TE Dallas Neil, DE Fred Perry, WR Mareno Philayaw.
Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Panthers

Injuries and off-field problems resulted in Muhammad having a subpar 2001 season.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

BY PAT YASINSKAS

The third coach in the history of the Panthers was the third choice. But John Fox just might be the perfect fit for the franchise.

"I think you will see that John is a motivator," Panthers owner Jerry Richardson says. "He's high energy."

That's precisely what the Panthers need after a disastrous 1-15 season in which they became the first team ever to lose 15 consecutive games in the same season. Players got disgruntled and fans stayed away.

Richardson, sensing the franchise no longer had a pulse, was left with no choice but to fire George Seifert. Runs were made at high-profile coaches Steve Spurrier and Tony Dungy, but they landed elsewhere. So Richardson turned to Fox, the former Giants defensive coordinator, to return the franchise to respectability.

Fox may not be a big name, but he has the kind of style and charisma that could be the cure for a franchise that hasn't had a winning season since 1996. Fox relates well to players, something that was lacking in the

Seifert era, and a renewed energy level was evident at the team's spring minicamps.

"Somebody I talked to said his energy can carry a team," says Panthers general manager Marty Hurney, who led the coaching search. "That's John. He's enthusiastic. He's a tireless worker. He's a people person."

But it's going to take more than people skills to turn around a team that finished last in the league in total defense and next-to-last in offense. Some of the growing pains of the youth movement Seifert started will continue, but Fox's immediate challenge will be to lessen the frequency of those pains.

COACHING Strategies—Fox's Panthers won't look much like Seifert's Panthers, and that's a good thing. Many of the same players remain, but there will be drastic changes in the offensive and defensive systems.

2002 schedule

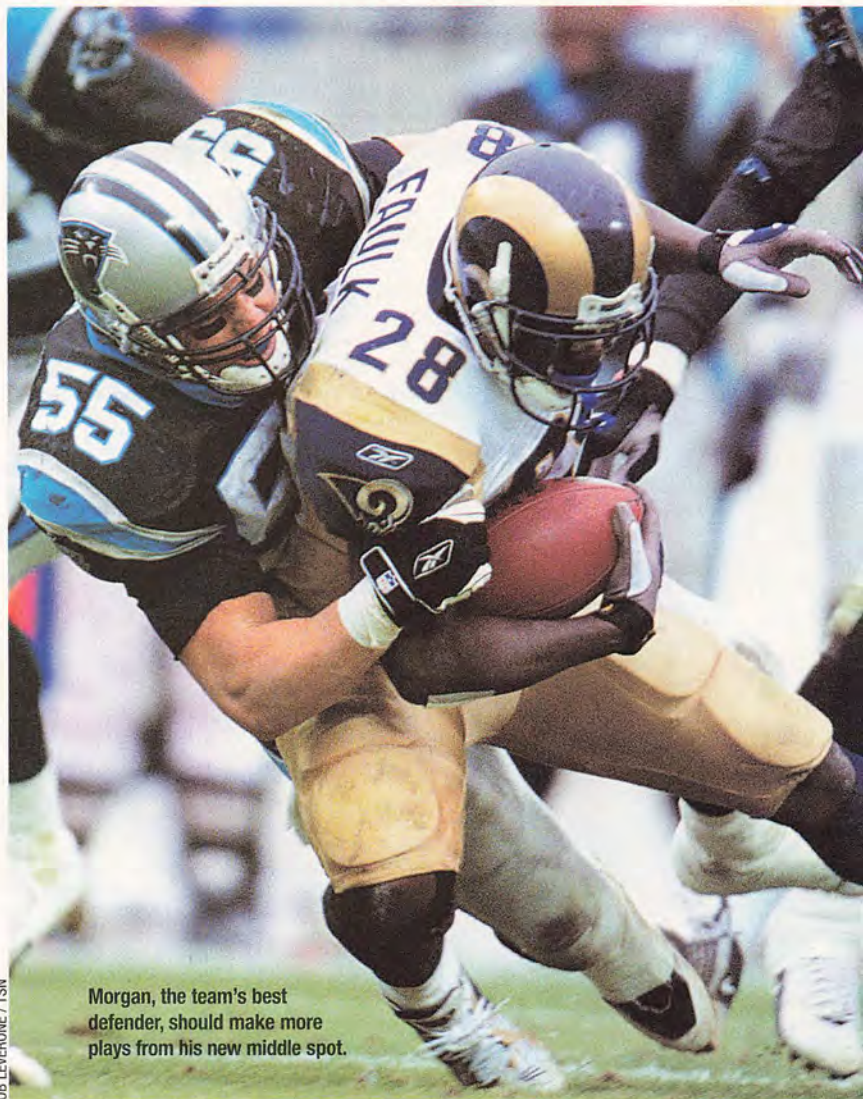
All times Eastern

Sept. 8	BALTIMORE	1:00	Nov. 10	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Sept. 15	DETROIT	1:00	Nov. 17	at Tampa Bay	4:05
Sept. 22	at Minnesota	1:00	Nov. 24	ATLANTA	1:00
Sept. 29	at Green Bay	1:00	Dec. 1	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 6	ARIZONA	1:00	Dec. 8	CINCINNATI	1:00
Oct. 13	at Dallas	1:00	Dec. 15	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Oct. 20	at Atlanta	1:00	Dec. 22	CHICAGO	1:00
Oct. 27	TAMPA BAY	1:00	Dec. 29	at New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 3	Open date		Strength of schedule: 18th		

Fox believes the key to building a good team is assembling a defense that can stop the running game and an offense that can run the ball consistently. That's a sharp departure from Seifert, who went with a bend-but-don't-break defense and an offense centered on the short passing game.

Fox will be a big help to former Ravens linebackers coach Jack Del Rio as he begins his first stint as an NFL defensive coordinator. The goal is to build an aggressive defense that can stop the run and pressure the quarterback. The top defensive priority in the offseason was to improve overall speed, and the franchise has done a good job of upgrading the defensive line and linebacker corps. The front seven is much faster than last year, and that should allow the secondary to be more aggressive.

New offensive coordinator Dan Henning also will start with an entirely new playbook. The emphasis will be on the running game, which should take some pressure off second-year quarterback Chris Weinke. Henning also will try to take advantage of Weinke's ability to throw downfield, a strength that wasn't used last year. The shotgun formation will be used for the first time in franchise history.



Morgan, the team's best defender, should make more plays from his new middle spot.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Style—Fox never has been a head coach at any level, but he's smart enough to realize he can't do everything. His background is as a defensive coach, and that's why bringing in the veteran Henning was a crucial move. A former head coach in Atlanta and San Diego, Henning has had lots of success as an offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. That should provide a big boost for Weinke, who was forced into a system last year that didn't fit his strengths.

Fox has assembled a top-notch staff, and he made wise moves by keeping Seifert assistants Paul Boudreau (offensive line), Scott O'Brien (special teams) and Richard Williamson (wide receivers). These guys are good, energetic coaches who should fit well with Fox and the new coaches he brought in. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Weinke was thrown into the fire in a brutal way last year. He wasn't named the starter until 10 days before the season and was asked to carry an offense that had no running game and a banged-up receiving corps.

The team's record and the statistics may not reflect it, but Weinke showed lots of promise. He has uncommon poise and maturity, and last year's experience will make his character even stronger. The arrival

of Fox and Henning also will help him.

The plan is to play to Weinke's strength. That's throwing the deep ball and occasionally using the shotgun, a formation Weinke had great success with in college. He still needs to improve his accuracy and decision making, but Henning's presence will make that process easier.

The Panthers made a wise move in signing veteran Rodney Peete to be the backup. Peete isn't a threat to steal Weinke's job, but he can provide Weinke with another shoulder to lean on. Peete's experience also gives the team a short-term solution if Weinke gets hurt.

Stanford's Randy Fasani was selected in the fifth round of the draft and is likely to be the third quarterback. Fasani has good size and arm strength and should benefit from Henning's ability as a teacher. Since Peete is signed only through this season, the team is hoping Fasani can develop into a backup. **GRADE: C-**

Running backs—This position was terrible last year as Tshimanga Biakabutuka had fumble problems and couldn't stay healthy, and Richard Huntley couldn't learn the playbook. Both are gone.

Lamar Smith, signed as a free agent, is likely to be the feature back at the start of the season. Smith is a tough, durable inside runner who should fit into the new offense nicely. But Smith, an 1,139-yard rusher for the Dolphins two years ago, may be only a short-term answer.

UCLA's DeShaun Foster, drafted in the second round, is likely to become the feature back of the future. Foster is a solid inside runner, but he also has the ability to get to the corner and be a factor in the passing game. Foster is likely to get more playing time as the season goes on, and his versatility should allow Henning to put more variety into the running game.

Fullback Brad Hoover has decent running and receiving skills, but he'll be asked to contribute more as a lead blocker with the increased emphasis on the running game.

2002 draft picks

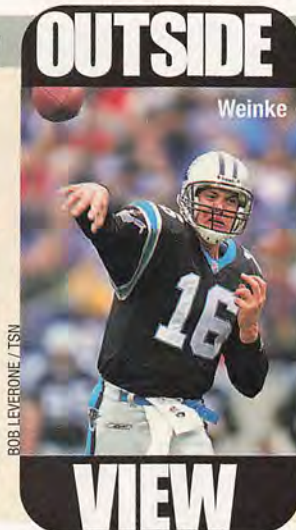
Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-2	Julius Peppers	DE	North Carolina	Gives Panthers something they've never had: a pass-rushing end.
2-34	DeShaun Foster	RB	UCLA	Tough and durable, but fumbling has been a problem.
3-73	Will Witherspoon	LB	Georgia	Has the speed to cover backs and tight ends, but is he ready to start?
4-100	Dante Wesley	CB	Ark.-Pine Bluff	Team's desperation at cornerback gives small-school product a shot.
5-137	Randy Fasani	QB	Stanford	Ideal scenario: He'll be the undisputed No. 2 QB a year from now.
5-145	Kyle Johnson	RB	Syracuse	Fills immediate need for a strong blocking fullback.
6-174	Keith Heinrich	TE	Sam Houston St.	Super athlete, but Panthers are stocked at tight end.
7-213	Steve Campion	G	North Dakota St.	Because offensive-line depth is so thin, he can't be counted out.
7-258	Brad Franklin	CB	La.-Lafayette	He and Wesley are in the same boat on corner-starved team.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-27	Rae Carruth	WR	Colorado	Out of football
'98-14	Jason Peter	DT	Nebraska	Out of football
'99	None			
'00-23	Rashard Anderson	DB	Jackson State	Backup with Panthers
'01-11	Dan Morgan	LB	Miami (Fla.)	Starter with Panthers

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

The biggest question mark on the team is **Chris Weinke**. Can he carry the load? I think the jury is definitely still out on him. I just think he's got to prove that he can move around the pocket more and show that he's got more elusiveness. He threw more picks than touchdowns last year, so the interceptions-to-touchdowns ratio has to reverse itself. And I would be concerned that those may not turn around. ... **Lamar Smith** didn't run the ball as well last year (for Miami) as the year before, but I don't think he's out of gas. I think he can get back to being a 1,000-yard back if he can keep himself on the field, because I think their line is good enough. I just don't know if he can be a 1,300- or 1,400-yard rusher. ... I think the biggest wild card is **DeShaun**



THE PANTHERS

Foster and what he brings to the offense. If Smith is not getting anything done, I have a feeling it won't take long for Foster to find the field. ... We had **Dan Morgan** on our draft board as an inside linebacker, so I think (moving him inside) is a good fit for him. They have a chance to be decent at linebacker with Morgan, (rookie) **Will Witherspoon** and a couple of other kids they got the last couple of years. ... They're still fishing for a second corner. By signing **Terry Cousin** and **DeRon Jenkins**, they're obviously trying to fix their secondary. ... **John Fox** is a rah-rah type of coach, a big motivator, and I think the players will like that. **George Seifert** was a bit quieter. They needed a spark, and I think they're going to get it from Fox.

Blocking hasn't been one of his strengths in the past, but Hoover has bulked up in anticipation of his new role. If Hoover can't be a consistent blocker, fifth-round pick Kyle Johnson could get a shot at the starting job. **GRADE: C+**

Receivers—There is a lot of uncertainty at a position that was viewed as the team's strongest area a year ago. Top receiver Muhsin Muhammad has to bounce back from a subpar season and tight end Wesley Walls has to come back strong from knee surgery if the passing game is going to be effective.

Muhammad is one of the most talented receivers in the league, but his production dropped dramatically last season. Injuries

were a factor, but so were off-field problems. Muhammad pledged to make some lifestyle changes after he faced drug and weapons charges in January. If Muhammad is healthy and focused, he will give Weinke a constant threat.

Walls is 36 and coming off reconstructive knee surgery for the second straight year. But he remains a steady, reliable receiver and Henning is likely to incorporate the tight end into the passing game more frequently. Backup Kris Mangum also is likely to get on the field more because Henning likes to use a fair amount of two-tight end sets.

The wild card in the receiving corps is Patrick Jeffers. After losing Donald Hayes to New England in free agency, the team is hoping Jeffers can claim a starting job. He started 10 games in 1999 and had a huge season (63 catches for 1,082 yards and 12 TDs). But Jeffers suffered a major knee injury in the 2000 preseason and did not play that year. He returned midway through last season, but lingering knee injuries prevented him from being a factor. Then, he missed the team's minicamp in May after a third surgery on his right knee in two years.

If Jeffers can't regain his form—a strong possibility—the team will have to look at other options. Isaac Byrd is a solid third receiver and may have to step into a starting role. Byrd is dependable as a possession receiver, but he's not a threat to stretch the field. Steve Smith, who made the Pro Bowl as a

kick returner as a rookie last year, also will get a look at receiver. Smith may be too small to be a starter, but his great speed could make him dangerous as a third or fourth receiver. The return of Williamson to wide receivers coach after spending last season as the offensive coordinator should be a major help because Muhammad and Jeffers each had their best seasons with him in that position. **GRADE: C**

Line—Despite having to pass-block con-

stantly last season, this unit allowed a franchise-low 32 sacks. That's a tribute to Boudreau, who is a master at getting his linemen to work effectively as a team. But there's a new challenge this year: improvement in run blocking.

The line didn't have to do a lot of run blocking last year, but that will change. The adjustment shouldn't be that difficult because there is good size on a line anchored by veterans Todd Steussie (left tackle), Jeff Mitchell (center) and Kevin Donnalley (right guard). The experience of that trio helped left guard Jamar Nesbit and right tackle Chris Terry make major improvements last year, and they should continue to get better.

Depth is the only real concern. Jeno James, the top backup at both guard and

tackle, is solid, but there's not much behind him. The team is hoping third-year player Leander Jordan can develop into the top backup guard, but he hasn't shown a lot in practice his first two seasons. **GRADE: B**

DEFENSE Line—The Panthers used the second overall pick in the draft in an attempt to get something that has been missing throughout franchise history: a pass-rushing end. North Carolina's Julius Peppers will be plugged in at left end immediately, although it might take some time for him to become a major force.

Peppers, who left college after his junior year and split his time there playing football and basketball, may be a little raw. But he has phenomenal upside. If Peppers, 22, can

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. With a running game to complement him and the freedom to throw downfield out of the shotgun formation, Chris Weinke will be the league's most improved quarterback.
2. Rookie DE Julius Peppers will become the first defensive lineman in franchise history to record double-digit sacks in a season—and fellow DE Mike Rucker will join him at the 10-sack plateau.
3. Rookie DeShaun Foster will unseat Lamar Smith as the feature back before the end of the season and put up decent numbers.
4. MLB Dan Morgan will put an end to SS Mike Minter's two-year rein as the team's leading tackler.
5. After a disappointing 2001 season in which he had injuries and off-field problems, WR Muhsin Muhammad will return to his previous form and catch at least 80 passes.



2001 results

Sept. 9	at Minnesota	W	24-13
Sept. 23	at Atlanta	L	16-24
Sept. 30	GREEN BAY	L	7-28
Oct. 7	at San Fran.	L	14-24
Oct. 14	NEW ORLEANS	L	25-27
Oct. 21	at Wash. (OT)	L	14-17
Oct. 28	N.Y. JETS	L	12-13
Nov. 4	at Miami	L	6-23
Nov. 11	at St. Louis	L	14-48
Nov. 18	SAN FRAN. (OT)	L	22-25
Nov. 25	ATLANTA	L	7-10
Dec. 2	at New Orleans	L	23-27
Dec. 9	at Buffalo	L	24-25
Dec. 16	Open date		
Dec. 23	ST. LOUIS	L	32-38
Dec. 30	ARIZONA	L	7-30
Jan. 6	NEW ENGLAND	L	6-38

Moves

Key additions

KR Michael Bates	Free agent/Redskins
DT Shane Burton	Free agent/Jets
CB Terry Cousin	Free agent/Dolphins
LB Mark Fields	Free agent/Rams
LB Brad Jackson	Free agent/Ravens
RB Joe Montgomery	Free agent/Giants
QB Rodney Peete	Free agent/Raiders
RB Lamar Smith	Free agent/Dolphins
CB Fred Vinson	Free agent

Key losses

RB Tshimanga Biakabutuka	Free agent
TE Luther Broughton	Free agent/Bears
DT Larry Chester	Free agent/Dolphins
CB Doug Evans	Free agent/Seahawks
LB Darrin Hambrick	Free agent
WR Donald Hayes	Free agent/Patriots
FB Chris Hetherington	Free agent/Rams
CB Jimmy Hitchcock	Free agent
RB Richard Huntley	Free agent
DE Jason Peter	Free agent
DE Chris Slade	Free agent
LB Dean Wells	Free agent

Stadium/Media

Ericsson Stadium (73,250, grass).

Ticket information: 704-358-7800.

Training site: Wofford College, Spartanburg, S.C.; 704-358-7000.

Radio: WRFX-FM (99.7).

Website: www.cpanthers.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 1-15 (5th in NFC West); 0-8 in division; 1-11 in conference; 0-4 vs. AFC; 0-8 at home; 1-7 on road; 1-4 on artificial turf; 0-11 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

John Fox's regular-season record: First season as NFL head coach.

Fox's post-season record: None.

Team record last five years: 27-53 (.338, ranks 28th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1996.

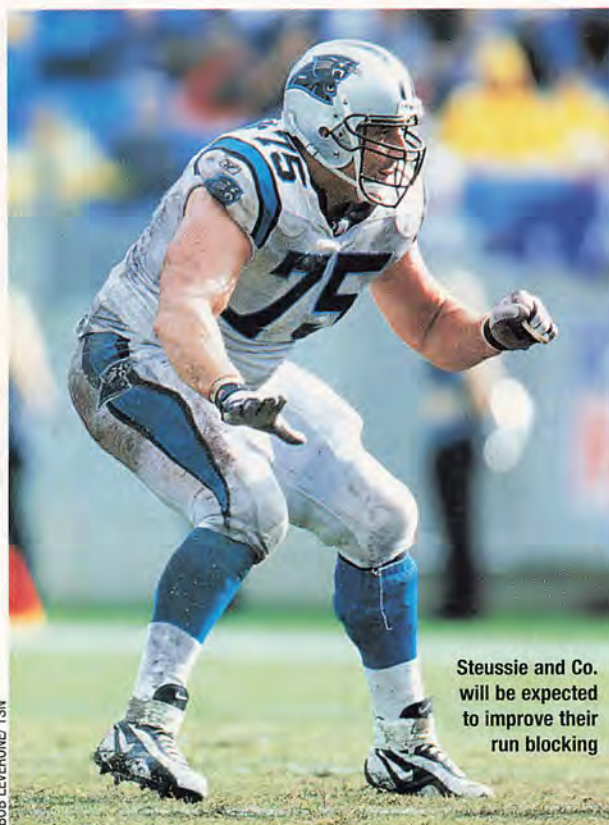
Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*265.9	15	30
Rushing offense	*85.8	14	29
Passing offense	*180.1	13	26
Scoring offense	253	14	29
Total defense	*371.4	15	31
Rushing defense	*143.8	15	31
Passing defense	*227.6	13	28
Scoring defense	410	14	28
Takeaways	36	4	7
Giveaways	35	T11	T23
Turnover differential	1	8	15
Sacks	26	12	28
Sacks allowed	32	5	12

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
John Fox	Head coach	14	1
Scott O'Brien	Asst. HC/special teams	12	4
Dan Henning	Offensive coord./QBs	26	1
Jack Del Rio	Defensive coordinator	6	1
Paul Boudreau	Offensive line	16	2
Don Breaux	Tight ends	23	8
Mike McCoy	Offensive assistant	3	3
Sam Mills	Linebackers	5	5
Rod Perry	Secondary	14	1
Alvin Reynolds	Defensive assistant	10	4
Darrin Simmons	Special teams/asst. strength	5	4
Jerry Simmons	Strength & conditioning	15	4
Jim Skipper	Running backs	16	1
Sal Sunseri	Defensive assistant	1	1
Mike Trgovac	Defensive line	8	1
Richard Williamson	Wide receivers	20	8



BOB LEVERONE/TSN

Steussie and Co. will be expected to improve their run blocking

develop quickly and pressure quarterbacks, he'll be a big help for a secondary that has lots of question marks.

Peppers' arrival also should help right end Mike Rucker, who had a breakthrough season in 2001 with nine sacks. Peppers and Rucker also will be critical in the run defense. All too often last season, opposing runners were able to get outside the ends and turn the corner for big yardage. Jay Williams, a part-time starter at left end last year, will be the top backup. He needs to dust off the pass-rush skills that seemed to disappear last year.

The middle of the line also needs to get better against the run. Defensive tackle Sean Gilbert isn't nearly as dominant as the team would like and part of the reason is he has been surrounded by mediocrity. Look for second-year pro Kris Jenkins to get the first shot at the starting job next to Gilbert. If Jenkins isn't ready, the team can fall back on veterans Brenton Buckner and Shane Burton. **GRADE: C**

Linebackers—The buzzword at this position this year will be speed. Fox and Del Rio want linebackers who can cover a lot of ground, and that's why there has been a lot of turnover. Dan Morgan will move to the middle after playing outside as a rookie last year.

The philosophy behind the move is that Morgan is the team's best defensive player and can make more plays in the middle. Morgan is big enough to plug the middle against the run, but he's also quick enough

to get outside and make tackles. Lester Towns, the starter in the middle last year, will be Morgan's backup, but his lack of speed probably will prevent him from getting much playing time.

One of the team's first moves in free agency was to sign Mark Fields to play on the strong side. Fields is noted for his speed and ability to stop the run. The weak side is a bit of a question mark, but there are viable options. Hannibal Navies opened last season as the starter and played well. But injuries have limited his production throughout his career. Navies has excellent speed, but the team drafted Georgia's Will Witherspoon as an alternative if Navies can't stay healthy. **GRADE: C+**

Secondary—Even with the improvements to the front seven, the defense could be in big trouble. Strong safety Mike Minter is the only established player in a secondary that has a lot of question marks.

Free safety Deon Grant showed some promise in his first season as a starter last year, but he made too many mistakes that resulted in big plays for the opposition. There's not much depth behind Minter and Grant, because Damien Richardson and Jarrod Cooper—the backup safeties—are on the roster mainly because of their special teams contributions.

But cornerback is a bigger concern than free safety. Last year's starters, Doug Evans and Jimmy Hitchcock, were released for salary-cap reasons and Rashard Anderson, a first-round pick in 2000, is likely to miss a chunk of the season after having neck surgery.

Terry Cousin, a nickel back in Miami last season, might be the best cornerback on the roster and likely will start. The other spot is wide open. Free-agent pickup Fred Vinson is a possibility, but he's coming off two major knee injuries and hasn't played in the NFL since 1999. DeRon Jenkins is another possibility, but he struggled in coverage as a part-time starter with Tennessee last season. Deveron Harper and Reggie Howard also will be in the mix, but it isn't likely either can be more than a nickel back. The team may get to camp and decide it has to find some veteran help.

GRADE: D-

SPECIAL TEAMS This is the team's strongest area and O'Brien deserves

REALIGNMENT reality

Without St. Louis and San Francisco as division foes, the Panthers' deficiencies in the secondary won't be exploited as easily. Coach John Fox's defensive philosophy is based on stopping the run, and his offensive philosophy is based on a successful running game. Both should play well in the NFC South. The Falcons have had trouble stopping the run in recent years, and the Saints made major changes in their defensive front. With Ricky Williams out of New Orleans, none of the other teams in the NFC South (including the Buccaneers) has a proven, dominating feature back, so stopping opponents' running games should be an attainable goal for the Panthers. The infusion of quickness on Carolina's defense also should help against Atlanta, which is building its offense around speedy second-year quarterback Michael Vick.



Peppers will start immediately, but it may take time for him to become a major force.

much of the credit. His coaching helped punter Todd Sauerbrun finally reach his potential last year, and O'Brien also helped Smith overcome some early inconsistency and earn a Pro Bowl berth. Smith produced three return touchdowns as a rookie and might be the premier return man in the league. John Kasay is one of the league's most reliable kickers, and Jason Kyle is a steady, veteran long snapper. Sauerbrun also will handle most of the kickoff duties, which will allow Kasay to concentrate on field goals.

O'Brien also is good at getting the most out of the coverage units, which should be even better this year with the infusion of speed across the roster. **GRADE: A**

BOTTOM LINE The good news is the Panthers can't be any worse than last year. The bad news is there's still a lot of work to be done in the rebuilding process. Fox will look like a genius this year because the team should win somewhere between five and eight games. The real test will be if the Panthers can turn the corner and be a playoff contender the following year. **TSN**

Pat Yasinkas covers the Panthers for the Charlotte Observer.

Projected depth chart

Offense

- WR** ● Muhsin Muhammad
□ Steve Smith
- LT** ■ Todd Steussie
□ Melvin Tuten
- LG** □ Jamar Nesbit
□ Jeno James
- C** ● Jeff Mitchell
□ Jamar Nesbit
- RG** ■ Kevin Donnalley
□ Leander Jordan
- RT** ■ Chris Terry
□ Jeno James
- TE** ● Wesley Walls
□ Kris Mangum
- WR** ■ Patrick Jeffers
■ Isaac Byrd
- QB** ■ Chris Weinke
□ Rodney Peete
- RB** ■ Lamar Smith
■ DeShaun Foster
- FB** □ Brad Hoover
□ Kyle Johnson

Defense

- LE** ■ Julius Peppers
□ Jay Williams
- LT** □ Kris Jenkins
□ Shane Burton
- RT** ■ Sean Gilbert
■ Brentson Buckner
- RE** ■ Mike Rucker
□ Jay Williams
- OLB** □ Hannibal Navies
□ Will Witherspoon
- MLB** ● Dan Morgan
□ Brad Jackson
- OLB** ■ Mark Fields
□ Kory Minor
- LCB** □ Fred Vinson
□ DeRon Jenkins
- RCB** □ Terry Cousin
□ Deveron Harper
- SS** ● Mike Minter
□ Jarrod Cooper
- FS** □ Deon Grant
□ Damien Richardson

Specialists

- K** ■ John Kasay
- P** ● Todd Sauerbrun
- KR** ● Steve Smith
- PR** ● Steve Smith
- LS** ■ Jason Kyle
- Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

PANTHERS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
12	Fasani, Randy	6-3/234	9-18-78	R	Stanford	D5a/02	—
9	Peete, Rodney	6-0/230	3-16-66	14	Southern California	UFA/02	1/0
16	Weinke, Chris	6-4/232	7-31-72	2	Florida State	D4/01	15/15
Running backs							
24	Bates, Michael	5-10/189	12-19-69	10	Arizona	UFA/01	16/0
20	Foster, DeShaun	6-0/222	1-10-80	R	UCLA	D2/02	—
37	Goings, Nick	6-0/225	1-26-78	R	Pittsburgh	FA/01	13/2
45	Hoover, Brad (FB)	6-2/225	11-11-76	3	Western Carolina	FA/00	16/7
32	Johnson, Kyle (FB)	6-0/242	12-15-78	R	Syracuse	D5b/02	—
26	Smith, Lamar	5-11/224	11-29-70	9	Houston	UFA/02	16/16
Receivers							
17	Baker, Tim	6-4/208	10-23-77	1	Texas Tech	FA/01	3/0
82	Byrd, Isaac	6-1/188	11-16-74	6	Kansas	W-Ten/00	15/5
84	Crawford, Casey (TE)	6-6/255	8-1-77	3	Virginia	FA/00	3/1
88	Hankton, Karl	6-2/202	7-24-70	4	Trinity (Ill.)	FA/00	11/0
80	Heinrich, Keith (TE)	6-5/255	3-19-79	R	Sam Houston State	D6/02	—
83	Jeffers, Patrick	6-3/218	2-2-73	7	Virginia	FA/99	9/0
86	Mangum, Kris (TE)	6-4/249	8-15-73	5	Mississippi	D7/97	16/10
87	Muhammad, Muhsin	6-2/217	5-5-73	7	Michigan State	D2/96	11/11
89	Smith, Steve	5-9/179	5-12-79	2	Utah	D3/01	15/1
85	Walls, Wesley (TE)	6-5/250	2-26-66	14	Mississippi	UFA/96	14/14
Offensive linemen							
72	Campion, Pete (G)	6-4/307	10-23-77	1	North Dakota State	D7a/02	—
65	Donnalley, Kevin (G)	6-5/310	6-10-68	12	North Carolina	UFA/01	6/6
78	James, Jeno (G-T)	6-3/292	1-12-77	3	Auburn	D6/00	14/6
76	Jordan, Leander (G)	6-3/320	9-15-77	3	Indiana Univ. (Pa.)	D3/00	13/5
60	Mitchell, Jeff (C)	6-4/300	1-29-74	6	Florida	UFA/00	15/15
63	Nesbit, Jamar (C-G)	6-4/330	12-17-76	4	South Carolina	FA/99	16/16
75	Steussie, Todd (T)	6-6/308	12-1-70	9	California	FA/01	16/16
70	Terry, Chris (T)	6-5/295	8-8-75	4	Georgia	D2a/99	15/15
73	Tuten, Melvin (T)	6-7/320	11-11-71	6	Syracuse	W-Den/00	15/1
Defensive linemen							
99	Buckner, Brentson (T)	6-2/305	9-30-71	9	Clemson	UFA/01	16/10
98	Burton, Shane	6-6/305	1-18-74	7	Tennessee	FA/02	15/13
94	Gilbert, Sean (T)	6-5/318	4-10-70	10	Pittsburgh	FA/98	9/9
77	Jenkins, Kris (T)	6-4/315	8-3-79	2	Maryland	D2/01	16/11
91	Milem, John (E)	6-7/290	6-9-75	3	Lenoir-Rhyne (N.C.)	W-SF/01	4/0
90	Peppers, Julius (E)	6-6/283	1-18-80	R	North Carolina	D1/02	—
93	Rucker, Michael (E)	6-5/258	2-28-75	4	Nebraska	D2b/99	16/16
96	Williams, Jay (E)	6-3/280	10-13-71	7	Wake Forest	UFA/00	16/13
Linebackers							
58	Fields, Mark	6-2/244	11-9-72	8	Washington State	FA/01	14/12
50	Jackson, Brad	6-0/230	1-11-75	4	Cincinnati	FA/02	16/5
56	Kyle, Jason	6-3/242	5-12-72	8	Arizona State	UFA/01	16/0
52	Minor, Kory	6-1/247	12-14-76	3	Notre Dame	FA/99	11/2
55	Morgan, Dan	6-2/233	12-19-78	2	Miami	D1/01	11/11
53	Navies, Hannibal	6-2/240	7-19-77	4	Colorado	D4/99	5/5
57	Towns, Lester	6-1/252	8-28-77	3	Washington	D7/00	16/15
54	Witherspoon, Will	6-1/231	8-19-80	R	Georgia	D3/02	—
Defensive backs							
46	Cooper, Jarrod (S)	6-0/210	3-31-78	2	Kansas State	D5/01	16/0
21	Cousin, Terry (CB)	5-9/182	3-11-75	6	South Carolina	UFA/01	16/3
	Franklin, Brad (CB)	6-0/186	12-22-79	R	Louisiana-Lafayette	D7b/02	—
27	Grant, Deon (S)	6-2/207	3-14-79	3	Tennessee	D2/00	16/16
28	Harper, Deveron (CB)	5-11/187	11-15-77	3	Notre Dame	FA/00	8/1
23	Howard, Reggie (CB)	6-0/190	5-17-77	3	Memphis	W-NO/00	11/0
25	Jenkins, DeRon (CB)	5-11/192	11-14-73	7	Tennessee	FA/01	15/7
30	Minter, Mike (S)	5-10/188	1-15-74	6	Nebraska	D2/97	14/14
39	Richardson, Damien (S)	6-1/210	4-3-76	5	Arizona State	D6/98	16/2
31	Vinson, Fred (CB)	5-11/180	4-2-77	3	Vanderbilt	FA/02	0/0
34	Wesley, Dante (CB)	6-0/211	4-5-79	R	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	D4/02	—
Specialists							
4	Kasay, John (K)	5-10/198	10-27-69	12	Georgia	UFA/95	16/0
10	Sauerbrun, Todd (P)	5-10/211	1-4-73	8	West Virginia	FA/01	16/0

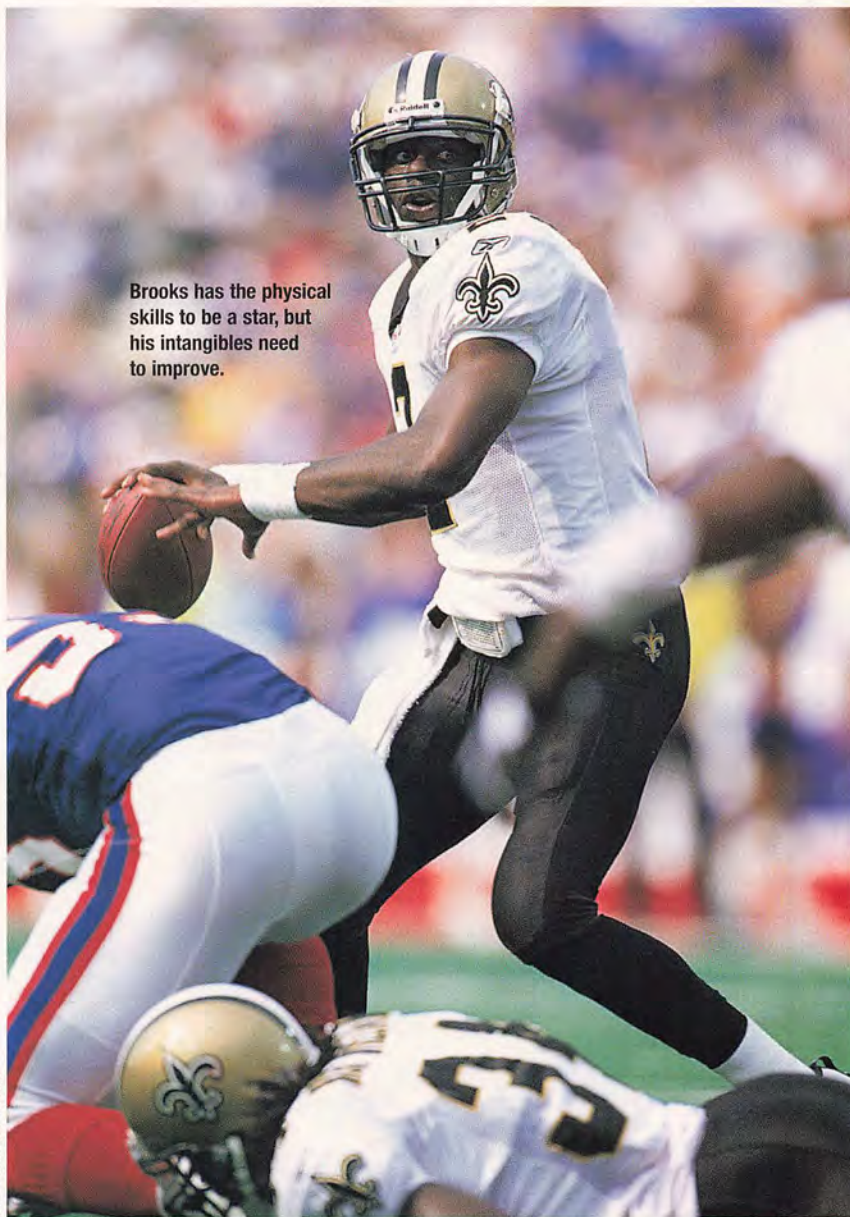
Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: G Derrick Fletcher, DT Emarlos Leroy, DT Jeff Marriott, CB Cordell Taylor, OL T.J. Washington.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Saints

Brooks has the physical skills to be a star, but his intangibles need to improve.



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

BY JEFF DUNCAN

Big Easy come. Big Easy go. That pretty much summed up the Saints' offseason. The club's Metairie, La., complex needed a revolving door to keep up with the changes on and off the field.

From the high-profile trades of Willie Roaf and Ricky Williams to a wave of free-agent signings and finally the shocking dismissal of general manager Randy Mueller in May, the Saints often were making news and providing headlines.

Changes were expected after a 7-9 season

that was uglier than the record conveys. Swamped by chemistry problems and off-field distractions, the Saints unraveled down the stretch. At 7-5, they were contending for a playoff berth. But the Saints finished with four straight losses by a combined score of 160-52. The on-field departures included headliners Roaf, Williams, Joe Johnson, La'Roi Glover, Keith Mitchell and Jeff Blake.

The quantity and quality of the departures were stunning. However, nobody saw the Mueller firing coming. THE SPORTING NEWS 2000 NFL Executive of the Year was entering the last year of a three-year con-

tract and was regarded as a hot commodity.

Before he was dismissed unexpectedly by owner Tom Benson, Mueller did an admirable job of restocking the roster. A vastly changed team will feature at least nine new starters and two others starting at new positions.

The Saints have high hopes, but are the expectations realistic with so many new faces, a quarterback entering only his second full season as the starter and a running back who is starting for the first time?

"I'm glad 2001 is over," Saints coach Jim Haslett says. "I'm excited and looking forward to this season. It's a great challenge for us to show the people that we're not that bad."

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	at Tampa Bay	4:15	Nov. 10	at Carolina	1:00
Sept. 15	GREEN BAY	1:00	Nov. 17	at Atlanta	1:00
Sept. 22	at Chicago	1:00	Nov. 24	CLEVELAND	1:00
Sept. 29	at Detroit	1:00	Dec. 1	TAMPA BAY	8:30
Oct. 6	PITTSBURGH	1:00	Dec. 8	at Baltimore	4:05
Oct. 13	at Washington	1:00	Dec. 15	MINNESOTA	1:00
Oct. 20	SAN FRAN.	1:00	Dec. 22	at Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 27	ATLANTA	1:00	Dec. 29	CAROLINA	1:00
Nov. 3	Open date		Strength of schedule: T 25th		

COACHING Strategies—

Personnel is not the only facet of the team undergoing changes. On defense, the emphasis will be on eliminating big plays and improving production against the run and in the red zone. The Saints were last in the NFC in red zone defense and allowed 35 pass plays of 25 yards or more and 10 runs of 20 yards or more. As a result, the Saints ditched the cover 2 scheme that was expected to defend the wide-open attacks of the Rams and 49ers.

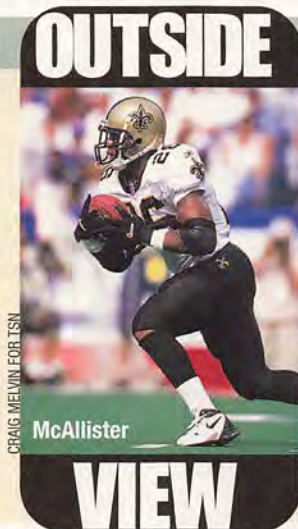
The new defense will be less complex. Up front, the line has been super-sized in an effort to improve against the run. The abilities of new cornerback Dale Carter allow for more man-to-man coverage and free up strong safety Sammy Knight to operate in the box, where he's best suited. The Saints will rely on fewer blitzes to pressure the quarterback.

Offensively, the West Coast scheme remains, but an emphasis will be on attacking downfield more often. Williams was a workhorse between the tackles, but in his three years with the team had just one run of longer than 30 yards. The Saints too often had to nibble their way downfield on 10- and 12-play drives. With Deuce McAllister and new receivers Donte Stallworth and Jerome Pathon joining Joe Horn, the Saints will have a quick-strike ability from anywhere on the field.

Style—Haslett must rediscover the confidence and swagger that helped carry the team to the 2000 NFC West title. For whatever reason, the 2001 Saints didn't play with the same sense of urgency or enthusiasm. It all started at the top. Haslett wasn't as aggressive and didn't coach with the same caution-to-the-wind panache that he

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

It's hard to replace a guy like **Joe Johnson**. Of all their losses, I think that's going to be the one that hurts the most. He may not be the fastest guy, but he's got a great combination of quickness and power. ... They may be able to overcome the loss of **Willie Roaf**. They've got **Kyle Turley**, who they can flip over to the left side. And **Victor Riley**, who they signed in the offseason, hopefully can be the right tackle. Kyle is an athlete, and he's played a little bit of left tackle. That's why he'll be able to make that switch. ... I would think they'll tailor their offense more around **Deuce McAllister**, just to try to get him the ball in the open field and let him use his speed. They could be better with Deuce, just because he gives them that big play,



THE SAINTS

that "I can score from 80 yards out" possibility that **Ricky Williams** really didn't. ... I think there's still some question whether **Aaron Brooks** can be the guy all the time. He's got the athletic ability. It's going to be more of: Can he get that completion percentage to 58, 59, 60, and knock the interceptions down to the mid-teens. ... Their skill-position guys look to be better on paper. We had **Donte Stallworth** ranked as one of the highest receivers on our draft board, so whenever someone else in your conference takes him, you're never happy. And **David Sloan** is a vertical, run-after-the-catch, power tight end with good strength and very good hands. ... They didn't get a lot younger at linebacker. If there's a weak link to their defense, it could show up there.

displayed as a rookie head coach. Haslett prefers an aggressive, in-your-face game and wants his team to play with an attitude. His team thrived in the underdog role but did not respond well when expectations were high last season.

Defensive coordinator Rick Venturi and assistant head coach/defensive backs coach Mike Riley are cerebral teachers who serve as calming influences for the emotional Haslett. Offensive coordinator Mike McCarthy is one of the bright young minds in the game. He also is a strong teacher. New quarterbacks coach Mike Sheppard, who was the offensive coordinator in Buffalo last season, should help McCarthy in his third season as coordinator. **GRADE: B+**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—The Saints like their quarterback situation a lot more than outsiders do. Aaron Brooks has all the physical tools to become a star. Still a developing talent, Brooks makes plays by buying time in the pocket with his scrambling ability and powerful right arm. His 3,832 passing yards last season were the most by a Saints quarterback since 1994.

To take the next step and become an elite quarterback, he needs to improve the intangibles: leadership, anticipation, decision-making and confidence. Brooks has a history of forcing things, leading to turnovers. His inexperience showed down the stretch last season, so the Saints brought in Sheppard to tutor him.

The Saints were confident enough in backup Jake Delhomme that they released veteran Jeff Blake. Delhomme hasn't taken a snap in two seasons, but the team loves his grasp of the offense and the way he consistently moves the team in practice. He's a good athlete who makes up for his average arm with knowledge of the system. Jeff

Lewis was signed as a veteran backup last spring. He failed as a starter in Carolina, but Lewis has experience and is familiar with the West Coast system. **GRADE: B-**

Running backs—The Saints tried to run through defenses with wrecking-ball blasts of 236-pound Williams the last three years. Now they will try to run past defenses with the mercurial McAllister. The much-publicized Williams trade opened the door for McAllister, a first-rounder in 2001. McAllister is an unknown commodity. He had 16 rushes and 15 receptions last season and was used mostly on kickoff returns during his rookie season. Still, the versatile speedster showed enough in flashes—a scintillating 54-yard touchdown run against Atlanta, for example—to make unloading Williams conceivable. So begins a new era.

McCarthy has tailored the offense to suit McAllister's running speed and receiving

skills. There will be fewer power and stretch plays and more sweeps and pitches.

McAllister is not particularly nimble or nifty, but give this slasher a seam or the corner and he has the speed to go the distance. The Saints want McAllister, who has an upright running style like Eddie George, to lower his pad level and body lean while in traffic. The team thinks this will reduce injuries and prevent fumbles.

McAllister's questionable durability is a concern because there's little experience behind him. James

Fenderson and Jeff Chaney have yet to carry the ball. The emphasis on multiple-receiver sets could work against keeping both of the fullbacks, Terrelle Smith and Moran Norris. Haslett says Norris is the most improved player on the roster. A former tight end, Norris might have the edge over Smith because of his pass-catching skills. **GRADE: C**

Receivers—The Saints added a former Pro Bowl tight end, the top-rated receiver in the draft and a decent, young talent as their No. 3 receiver. David Sloan, Donte Stallworth and Jerome Pathon will team with Pro Bowl receiver Joe Horn to give Brooks four targets who are scoring threats.

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Buffalo	W	24-6
Sept. 23	Open date		
Sept. 30	at N.Y. Giants	L	13-21
Oct. 7	MINNESOTA	W	28-15
Oct. 14	at Carolina	W	27-25
Oct. 21	ATLANTA	L	13-20
Oct. 28	at St. Louis	W	34-31
Nov. 4	N.Y. JETS	L	9-16
Nov. 11	at San Francisco	L	27-28
Nov. 18	INDIANAPOLIS	W	34-20
Nov. 25	at New England	L	17-34
Dec. 2	CAROLINA	W	27-23
Dec. 9	at Atlanta	W	28-10
Dec. 17	ST. LOUIS	L	21-34
Dec. 23	at Tampa Bay	L	21-48
Dec. 30	WASHINGTON	L	10-40
Jan. 6	SAN FRANCISCO	L	0-38

NICKEL PACKAGE

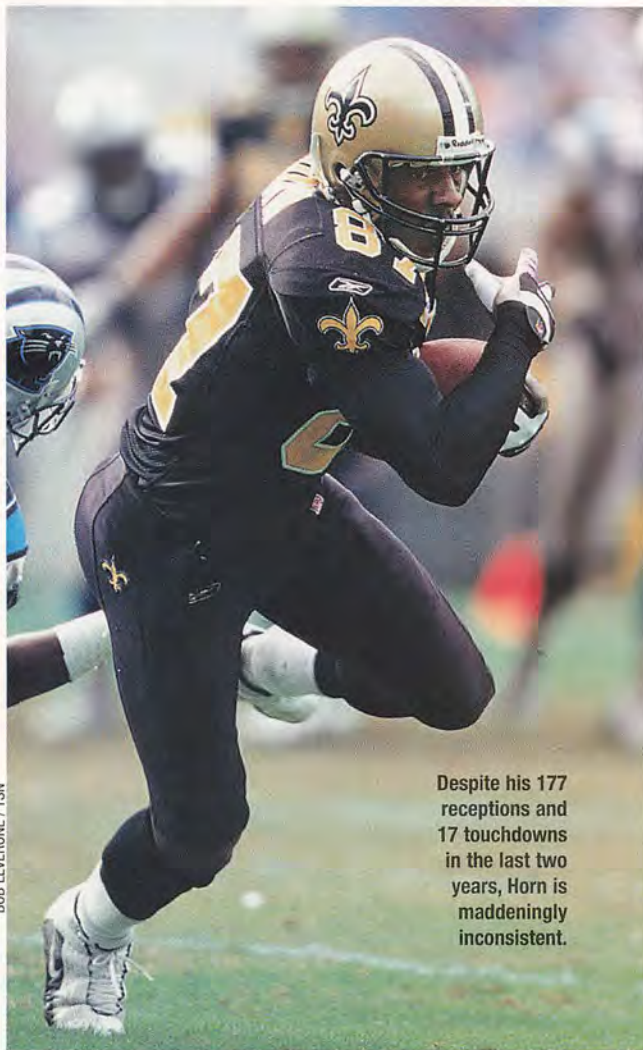
Five things to look for:

1. So long sacks. The loss of DE Joe Johnson and DT La'Roi Glover will prevent the Saints from leading the NFC in sacks for a third consecutive season.
2. QB Aaron Brooks will have a breakthrough 2002. Brooks passed for 3,832 yards last season without a proven tight end, a No. 3 receiver or a reliable left tackle. He'll flourish with a superior supporting cast.
3. Kyle Turley will more than replace Willie Roaf at left tackle. But Turley will continue to get snubbed for the Pro Bowl because of his reputation as a dirty player.
4. Dale Carter will be a disappointment. He's a 32-year-old corner who hasn't played a full season since 1997.
5. The club's eight-year drought without a punt return for a touchdown will end. Rookies WR Donte Stallworth and CB Keyuo Craver are potential home run hitters as return men.



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BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Despite his 177 receptions and 17 touchdowns in the last two years, Horn is maddeningly inconsistent.

The upgrade of talent means less work for Horn, who clearly is the team's No. 1 target. He produced 177 receptions and 17 touchdowns the past two seasons. With Stallworth and Pathon on board, defenses won't be able to constantly roll their deep coverages to Horn, which always happened with Willie Jackson on the other side. The highly competitive Horn is explosive but maddeningly inconsistent. He is not the fastest receiver in the league, but he is extremely powerful and able to outmuscle smaller defensive backs for the ball in traffic. He is in his prime and shows no signs of slowing down.

Stallworth has great speed coupled with good size (6-0, 197). The 13th overall pick of the draft, he is ideal for the West Coast offense. He should be a major threat on slants and crossing routes.

Before landing Stallworth, the Saints would have been happy to start Pathon, who now will be used in the slot. Pathon needs to regain the confidence he was showing before injuring his foot last season.

For the first time in a few years, the Saints have an every-down threat at tight end with the towering Sloan (6-6). He'll be the vertical threat down the deep seam of the

defense, an area the Saints haven't been able to exploit the last two seasons because of injuries to Cam Cleeland. Sloan is prone to drops but should become a favorite target for Brooks over the middle. Look for the Saints to make heavy use of three-receivers packages that also will include good receiving options in Sloan and McAllister.

GRADE: B+

Line—A veteran front five had a miserable 2001 season, so Mueller shook up the unit, saying goodbye to Roaf, the anchor for the past nine seasons, guard Chris Naeole and three key reserves.

In 2001, the line surrendered 50 sacks, fifth most in the NFL. This never became the dominant run-blocking unit it was proclaimed to be, and it contributed heavily to a conference-high 119 offensive penalties.

The new offense will place a premium on pass protection and speed so the line must be in better shape than ever. Much will depend upon tackle Kyle Turley, the unquestioned leader of the unit now that Roaf is gone. Turley is switching from right to left

tackle, and the Saints are confident he will adapt quickly and easily.

Wally Williams returns at left guard and Jerry Fontenot probably will start at center. If Turley's transition goes smoothly, the left side of the line will be an area of strength.

Victor Riley, a free-agent pickup, has as much talent as any right tackle in the league. Riley's challenge is controlling his weight and remaining focused. As insurance, the Saints signed versatile veteran Spencer Folau to back up both tackle spots.

Rookie LeCharles Bentley is expected to win the right guard spot. Bentley was dominant during offseason workouts and quickly established himself as a powerful drive blocker with a Turley-like nasty streak. This second-round pick was the top-rated center in the draft, so eventually he will move to that spot.

The team improved its interior depth by signing former Eagle Bubba Miller, who can play center or guard. Miller is coming off a serious ankle injury, but if fully recovered, he could supplant Fontenot as the starting center. **GRADE: B**

DEFENSE Line—The tackle trio of 310-pound Norman Hand, 325-pound Grady Jackson and 310-pound Martin Chase gives the Saints plenty of beef for the interior. The three-tackle rotation should help the Saints in the run-oriented NFC South. Glover, who signed a free-agent deal with Dallas, was a pit bull at tackle for the Saints, but at 285 pounds, he also was a liability against the run. Teams exploited this, especially when Hand was injured. But as long as Hand and Jackson stay in shape and on the field, offenses won't be able to pound inside. Both had subpar 2001 seasons because of poor conditioning and injuries. When healthy and motivated, Hand and Jackson can dominate.

The Saints are excited about Chase, who is a better athlete than the starters but without their bulk. Chase impressed the coaches with his pass-rushing skills during limited

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-13	Donte Stallworth	WR	Tennessee	Injuries have been a problem, but Saints think he's a playmaker.
1-25	Charles Grant	DE	Georgia	Good athlete with great speed but was very inconsistent at Georgia.
2-44	LeCharles Bentley	C/G	Ohio State	Has great strength and a feisty, nasty attitude the Saints love.
3-82	James Allen	LB	Oregon State	Plays with passion and has the frame to add needed weight.
4-125	Keyuo Craver	CB	Nebraska	Fine athlete, but critics say he doesn't make many plays.
5-150	Mel Mitchell	S	Western Kentucky	Fills a need for depth at safety and might return kicks.
6-186	J.T. O'Sullivan	QB	UC-Davis	Intelligent player, but it's a big step up from Division II to the NFL.
6-196	John Gilmore	TE	Penn State	Saints are deep at tight end, and his skills aren't special.
7-224	Derrius Monroe	DE	Virginia Tech	If he can't play on special teams, he likely won't make the team.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-10	Chris Naeole	G	Colorado	Starter with Jaguars
'98-7	Kyle Turley	OT	San Diego State	Starter with Saints
'99-5	Ricky Williams	RB	Texas	Starter with Dolphins
'00	None			
'01-23	Deuce McAllister	RB	Mississippi	Starter with Saints

chances last season.

The Saints don't have anyone with the departed Johnson's ability at end. His nine sacks last year were the most for any lineman on this team. To replace Johnson, Darren Howard will move from the left to the right side, his natural position. The Saints hope he can be a double-digit sack producer for many years. Howard is a better athlete than Johnson but lacks his experience. If Howard struggles in single matchups against top left tackles, the Saints will be in trouble.

Don't be surprised by a drop-off in production on the left side, where the job will



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

If the cornerbacks do their part, Knight can act as more of a fourth linebacker.

go to Willie Whitehead or rookie Charles Grant, the 25th overall pick. Whitehead is a Glover clone. The coaching staff was excited about Whitehead until his performance tailed off drastically during the second half of last season. Grant was one of the few ends in the draft who had the reputation of playing well against the run or pass. However, he needs time to develop.

The tackles will be asked to push the pocket and clog the interior. The ends no longer will be asked to take inside slants that help funnel the run to the outside, as they have in the past. Instead, Venturi wants the ends to rush wide and upfield. Despite the loss of Johnson and Glover, the coaches are confident the defense still can pressure the passer. In addition to Howard, the Saints have pass-rushing linebacker Charlie Clemons, who had a team-best 13½ sacks last year, and they hope tackle Kenny Smith emerges in his second season. **GRADE: B**

Linebackers—If you are looking for a weakness, here it is. The group as a whole didn't make enough big plays and was exploited for big plays by backs and tight

ends in the passing game. The trio of Sedrick Hodge, Clemons and Darrin Smith isn't going to scare many teams. Other than Clemons' pass-rush ability, these linebackers lack special qualities. They are too one-dimensional.

In 2001, teams ran at will outside against lightweight outside 'backers Smith and Keith Mitchell. The Saints tried to find a run-stuffing starter for the strong side. They made a run at free agent Kevin Hardy, but couldn't afford his price tag. Now the Saints must hope the interior linemen can occupy blockers so the undersized Smith and Hodge can make plays in pursuit.

Clemons must step forward as leader. He has rare skills as a pass-rush specialist. However, when he wasn't rushing the passer, Clemons was lost in the middle, where he lacked instincts and often took the wrong lane or angle in pursuit.

At 32, Smith has lost a step and is better suited to a nickel role. Hodge has the size (6-4, 244) and athletic ability to become a star. He needs to become more physical at the point of attack.

Veteran Bryan Cox will provide depth. He missed part of last season with a broken leg. The team needs to get something out of Roger Knight and Curtis Holden and third-round pick James Allen. **GRADE: D+**

Secondary—The Saints are counting heavily on Carter. When he is paired with Fred Thomas, the Saints have two cornerbacks who can get physical with receivers. If the corners do their job, safety Sammy Knight can act as a fourth linebacker. It will be interesting to see how Carter, who missed most of the last two seasons, plays during a full season. The Saints are asking for a lot from a player who has a reputation for being unreliable and unprofessional.

The Saints didn't get a ready-to-start cornerback in the draft, so they signed veteran Ken Irvin to play the nickel role. Like Thomas, Irvin is small but physical, and he's solid in single coverage. Michael Hawthorne has the tools but is inconsistent. This is a make-or-break year for him. Kevin Mathis is a health risk because of a severe knee injury, which happened late last season. Rookie corner Keyuo Craver is a year or two away from contributing.

Free safety Jay Bellamy, who is solid in coverage but not a big hitter, will play more of a center field role in the new scheme. Knight is coming off his first Pro Bowl year. He lacks great speed, but the coaches consider him to be the smartest defender on the team. He's adept at reading coverages and is a force in run support. Rookie Mel Mitchell, a raw talent who could develop into a starter, is expected to be the top backup safety. **GRADE: B+**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Saints have gradually rebuilt their kicking game over the last two seasons. Now they must work on the return units.

Moves

Key additions

CB Dale Carter
LB Bryan Cox
OL Spencer Folau
CB Ken Irvin
DT Grady Jackson
QB Jeff Lewis
C Bubba Miller
WR Jerome Pathon
WR Jake Reed
OT Victor Riley
TE David Sloan

Free agent/Vikings
Free agent/Patriots
Free agent/Dolphins
Free agent/Bills
Free agent/Raiders
Free agent
Free agent/Eagles
Free agent/Colts
Free agent/Vikings
Free agent/Chiefs
Free agent/Lions

Key losses

G Tom Ackerman
QB Jeff Blake
TE Cam Cleeland
WR Albert Connell
DT La'Roi Glover
CB Steve Israel
DE Joe Johnson
LB Keith Mitchell
G Chris Naeole
OT Marcus Price
OT Willie Roaf
CB Fred Weary
RB Ricky Williams

Free agent/Raiders
Free agent
Free agent/Patriots
Free agent
Free agent/Cowboys
Free agent
Free agent/Packers
Free agent
Free agent/Jaguars
Free agent/Bills
Trade/Chiefs
Free agent/Falcons
Trade/Dolphins

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Records

2001 regular-season record: 7-9 (3rd in NFC West); 4-4 in division; 5-7 in conference; 2-2 vs. AFC; 3-5 at home; 4-4 on road; 6-5 on artificial turf; 1-4 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Jim Haslett's regular-season record: 17-15 in two seasons with Saints.

Haslett's postseason record: 1-1 in one appearance with Saints.

Team record last five years: 32-48 (.400, ranks T25th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*326.6	5	10
Rushing offense	*107.0	9	T18
Passing offense	*219.6	6	10
Scoring offense	333	6	13
Total defense	*316.9	10	T16
Rushing defense	*107.2	7	14
Passing defense	*209.7	7	17
Scoring defense	409	13	27
Takeaways	30	T9	T14
Giveaways	35	T11	T23
Turnover differential	-5	11	21
Sacks	53	1	2
Sacks allowed	50	13	27

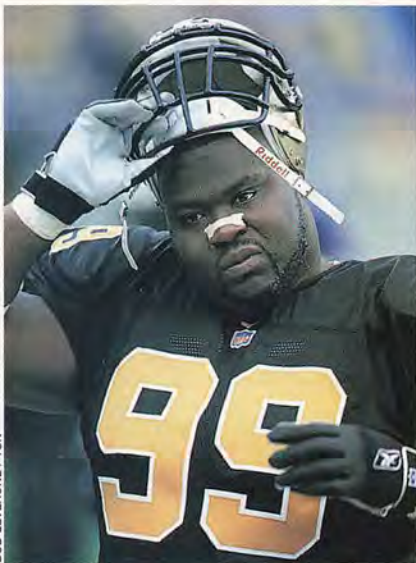
*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Jim Haslett	Head coach	10	3
Mike Riley	Assistant HC/secondary	4	1
Mike McCarthy	Offensive coordinator	10	3
Rick Venturi	Defensive coordinator	21	7
Hubbard Alexander	Wide receivers	14	3
Dave Atkins	Running backs	17	3
Joe Baker	Secondary assistant	7	3
Greg Brown	Def. asst./quality control	12	1
Sam Clancy	Defensive line	3	3
Al Everest	Special teams	7	3
Rock Gullickson	Strength & conditioning	3	3
Jack Henry	Offensive line	9	3
Jim Hostler	Wide receivers assistant	3	2
Danny Langsdorf	Off. asst./quality control	1	1
Evan Marcus	Asst. strength & cond.	3	3
Winston Moss	Linebackers	4	3
Bob Palcic	Tight ends	9	3
Mike Sheppard	Quarterbacks	10	1

REALIGNMENT reality

Let's see. Lose the explosive Rams and 49ers. Gain the offensively challenged Bucs. Lose QBs Kurt Warner and Jeff Garcia. Gain Brad and Rob Johnson. Think the Saints are happy about realignment? The new NFC South doesn't have any team as talented as St. Louis, which has been the best team in football the last three seasons, or San Francisco, which looks to be on the verge of an extended playoff run. Tampa Bay is the favorite, but the Johnson boys don't make defensive coordinators lose sleep. With Carolina still a year or two away from contention and Atlanta in transition with Michael Vick at quarterback, the Saints have a shot at winning the division. The road to the division title is not just easier, it's shorter. Carolina now represents the longest trip in the division. And for the first time in club history, the Saints don't travel west of the Mississippi River in a season.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

If he can stay healthy, Hand will contribute 310 pounds of beef to the defensive tackle rotation.

The draft might have ended the club's seemingly endless search for a return man. Stallworth, Craver and Mitchell were top-notch return men in college. They will battle in training camp for kickoff- and punt-return jobs. The Saints haven't returned a punt for a touchdown in eight seasons or a kickoff for a touchdown in three seasons.

Kicker John Carney is reliable from inside 45 yards (24-of-26 with one block) and had two five-field goal games. Punter Toby Gowin has been a disappointment the last two seasons. He has had to sacrifice yardage to adhere to the club's demand for angle punts. Kevin Houser is considered one of the fastest and most accurate long snappers in the NFL. He rarely makes a mistake. **GRADE: C**

BOTTOM LINE If the new faces mesh quickly with the holdovers, the talent is there to contend for a playoff spot. Realistically, though, a .500 season with renewed passion and confidence would be a nice step forward.

TSN

Jeff Duncan covers the Saints for the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ Donte' Stallworth
■ Jerome Pathon

LT ● Kyle Turley
□ Scott Sanderson

LG ■ Wally Williams
□ Mitch White

C ■ Jerry Fontenot
■ Bubba Miller

RG ■ LeCharles Bentley
□ Tutan Reyes

RT ● Victor Riley
□ Spencer Folau

TE ■ David Sloan
□ Lamont Hall

WR ● Joe Horn
□ Jake Reed

QB ■ Aaron Brooks
□ Jake Delhomme

RB ■ Deuce McAllister
□ Fred McAfee

FB ■ Moran Norris
■ Terrelle Smith

Defense

LE ■ Willie Whitehead
■ Charles Grant

LT ● Grady Jackson
□ Martin Chase

RT ● Norman Hand
□ Kenny Smith

RE ■ Darren Howard
□ Kenny Smith

SLB ■ Sedrick Hodge
□ Roger Knight

MLB ■ Charlie Clemons
■ Bryan Cox

WLB □ Darrin Smith
□ James Allen

LCB ■ Dale Carter
■ Ken Irvin

RCB ■ Fred Thomas
□ Michael Hawthorne

SS ● Sammy Knight
□ Steve Gleason

FS ■ Jay Bellamy
□ Mel Mitchell

Specialists

K ■ John Carney

P ■ Toby Gowin

KR ■ Donte' Stallworth

PR ■ Donte' Stallworth

LS ● Kevin Houser

● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

SAINTS ROSTER

No.	Name	HT/Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
2	Brooks, Aaron	6-4/210	3-24-76	4	Virginia	T-GB/00	16/16
14	O'Sullivan, J.T.	6-2/220	8-25-79	R	California-Davis	D6a/02	—
Running backs							
48	Fenderson, James (FB)	5-9/200	10-24-76	R	Hawaii	FA/01	4/0
47	Houser, Kevin (FB)	6-2/250	8-23-77	3	Ohio State	D7/00	16/0
25	McAfee, Fred	5-10/193	6-20-68	11	Mississippi College	UFA/00	16/0
26	McAllister, Deuce	6-1/222	12-27-78	2	Mississippi	D1/01	16/4
33	Norris, Moran	6-1/250	6-16-78	2	Kansas	D4/01	5/0
44	Smith, Terrelle (FB)	6-0/246	3-12-78	3	Arizona State	D4/00	14/9
Receivers							
45	Gilmore, John (TE)	6-3/265	9-21-79	R	Penn State	D6b/02	—
81	Hall, Lamont (TE)	6-4/260	11-16-74	4	Clemson	T-GB/00	16/6
87	Horn, Joe	6-1/206	1-16-72	7	None	UFA/00	16/16
84	Lewis, Michael	5-8/165	11-14-71	1	None	FA/01	8/0
80	Pathon, Jerome	6-0/182	12-16-75	5	Washington	UFA/02	4/3
86	Reed, Jake	6-3/213	9-28-67	12	Grambling	FA/02	16/0
88	Sloan, David (TE)	6-6/260	6-8-72	8	New Mexico	UFA/02	15/15
83	Stallworth, Donte'	6-0/197	11-10-80	R	Tennessee	D1a/02	—
82	Williams, Boo (TE)	6-4/235	6-22-79	R	Arkansas	FA/00	11/4
Offensive linemen							
65	Bentley, LeCharles (C)	6-3/299	11-7-79	R	Ohio State	D2/02	—
71	Folau, Spencer (T)	6-5/300	4-5-73	6	Idaho	UFA/02	16/15
62	Fontenot, Jerry (C)	6-3/300	11-21-66	14	Texas A&M	UFA/97	16/16
	Miller, Bubba (C)	6-1/305	1-24-73	7	Tennessee	FA/02	0/0
76	Reyes, Tutan (T)	6-3/299	10-28-77	3	Mississippi	D5a/00	1/0
66	Riley, Victor (T)	6-5/328	11-4-74	5	Auburn	UFA/02	7/5
68	Turley, Kyle (T)	6-5/300	9-24-75	5	San Diego State	D1/98	16/16
63	Williams, Wally (G)	6-2/321	2-20-71	10	Florida A&M	UFA/99	15/15
Defensive linemen							
92	Chase, Martin (T)	6-2/310	12-19-74	5	Oklahoma	W-Bal/00	16/3
94	Grant, Charles (E)	6-3/282	9-3-78	R	Georgia	D1b/02	—
99	Hand, Norman (T)	6-3/310	9-4-72	8	Mississippi	UFA/00	13/13
93	Howard, Darren (E)	6-3/281	11-19-76	3	Kansas State	D2/00	16/16
91	Jackson, Grady (T)	6-2/330	1-21-73	5	Knoxville College	UFA/02	16/16
97	Monroe, Derrius (E)	6-4/269	7-21-78	R	Virginia Tech	D7/02	—
90	Smith, Kenny (T)	6-3/289	9-8-77	2	Alabama	D3b/01	6/0
98	Whitehead, Willie (E)	6-3/285	1-26-73	4	Auburn	FA/99	14/0
Linebackers							
95	Allen, James	6-2/240	11-11-79	R	Oregon State	D3/02	—
56	Clemons, Charlie	6-2/250	7-4-72	6	Georgia	FA/00	16/15
51	Cox, Bryan	6-4/250	2-17-68	12	Western Illinois	UFA/02	11/7
52	Hodge, Sedrick	6-4/244	9-13-78	2	North Carolina	D3a/01	16/1
57	Holden, Curtis	6-2/232	3-17-79	R	Washington State	FA/01	12/0
58	Jackson, Jonathan	6-2/248	9-2-77	R	Oregon State	FA/01	1/0
53	Knight, Roger	6-0/245	10-11-78	1	Wisconsin	FA/01	1/0
54	Smith, Darrin	6-1/230	4-15-70	9	Miami (Fla.)	FA/00	16/16
Defensive backs							
20	Bellamy, Jay (S)	5-11/200	7-8-72	9	Rutgers	UFA/01	16/16
21	Carter, Dale (CB)	6-1/194	11-28-69	10	Tennessee	UFA/02	8/8
41	Carter, Tim (CB)	6-0/183	7-15-78	1	Tulane	FA/01	2/0
43	Craver, Keyuo (CB)	5-10/195	8-22-80	R	Nebraska	D4/02	—
37	Gleason, Steve	5-11/215	3-19-77	1	Washington State	FA/00	7/0
36	Hawthorne, Michael (CB)	6-3/196	1-26-77	3	Purdue	D6b/00	11/2
27	Irvin, Ken (CB)	5-11/186	7-11-72	7	Memphis	FA/02	14/4
29	Knight, Sammy (S)	6-0/205	9-10-75	6	Southern California	FA/97	16/16
23	Mathis, Kevin (CB)	5-9/181	4-29-74	6	East Texas State	T-Dal/00	14/13
40	Mitchell, Mel (CB)	6-1/220	2-2-79	R	Western Kentucky	D5/02	—
31	Newsome, Richard (S)	5-11/202	12-6-77	R	Michigan State	FA/01	11/0
22	Thomas, Fred (CB)	5-9/172	9-11-73	7	Tennessee-Martin	UFA/00	16/16
49	Wilson, Jerry (CB)	5-10/187	7-17-73	6	Southern	FA/96	1/0
Specialists							
3	Carney, John (K)	5-11/180	4-20-64	13	Notre Dame	FA/01	15/0
4	Gowin, Toby (P)	5-10/167	3-30-75	6	North Texas	FA/00	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: FB Jeff Chaney, QB Jake Delhomme, QB Jeff Lewis, DB Dee Moronkola, WR Onome Ojo, C/G John Romero, OT Scott Sanderson, DT Richard Seals, OT Mitch White. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Buccaneers



The mere thought of dropping out of the elite class of pass rushers should spur on Sapp.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

BY ROY CUMMINGS

You laughed. Of course, you laughed. Shoot, didn't just about everybody in football, including some inside One Buc Place, laugh as the sons of Bucs owner Malcolm Glazer tried to conduct a coaching search after firing Tony Dungy and being jilted by Bill Parcells?

But look who's laughing now. The Glazer boys, Joel, Bryan and Ed, went from laughingstocks to swindlers in the eyes of many when they pulled off the deal that extracted Jon Gruden from the Raiders for first- and second-round draft picks in 2002 and 2003.

Yes, it was a high price to pay for a coach. The highest ever. But giving up a first-round pick for a coach didn't keep the Patriots from winning a Super Bowl, and the Glazers don't think giving up four high picks will keep them from winning one, either.

Right now, Gruden has everything going for him. He's immensely popular, and his track record is strong. He's the only current NFL coach to win division titles in each of the last two years, and making it three in a row shouldn't be too difficult.

The one thing that remains from the Dungy era is a defense that is among the

league's best. All Gruden needs to do is push the offense into the mainstream—and the talent is there to do that.

COACHING Strategies—After Parcells, Gruden was the coach the Bucs wanted most. Gruden is the anti-Dungy. He is very offensive-minded—so much so that he has all but left the defense to coordinator Monte Kiffin and assistant head coach/defensive line coach Rod Marinelli, holdovers from Dungy's staff.

Kiffin and Marinelli consistently have produced one of the league's best and most-copied defenses. It is one that emphasizes speed and quickness over size and an active rotation system. It also requires everyone to move hard to the ball, and it calls for the secondary to play plenty of cover 2, which takes away the big play by slightly reducing the need for cornerbacks to match up one-on-one against receivers.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	NEW ORLEANS	4:15	Nov. 10	Open date	
Sept. 15	at Baltimore	1:00	Nov. 17	CAROLINA	4:05
Sept. 23	ST.L. (Mon.)	9:00	Nov. 24	GREEN BAY	1:00
Sept. 29	at Cincinnati	4:05	Dec. 1	at New Or.	8:30
Oct. 6	at Atlanta	1:00	Dec. 8	ATLANTA	1:00
Oct. 13	CLEVELAND	4:15	Dec. 15	at Detroit	1:00
Oct. 20	at Philadelphia	1:00	Dec. 23	PIT. (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 27	at Carolina	1:00	Dec. 29	at Chicago	8:30
Nov. 3	MINNESOTA	1:00	Strength of schedule: 24th		

Gruden uses a West Coast-based scheme, but he bristles when people refer to it as a West Coast offense because Gruden has applied plenty of his own innovations. He uses a lot of two-back sets and won't hesitate to run the ball far more than he throws it. He features the tight end a lot, but his offense doesn't focus on receivers running horizontal routes that allow the quarterback to attack different levels of the defense like in a traditional West Coast system. Gruden likes to run a lot of the same plays, but he mixes up the look by changing formations and using motion. This offense always will be on the move.

Style—Gruden is highly animated, and that may be a welcome change. Though Dungy got through to his players when he had to, Gruden's intensity should allow the team to avoid the slow start that annually has plagued it.

Gruden is not unwilling to make lineup changes if necessary. Dungy was very patient and quite hesitant to alter his lineup. Gruden is big on providing even the best players with strong competition.

Gruden is a very good teacher of quarterbacks. He got great results from Rich

Getting Johnson more catches in the red zone and the end zone is one of Gruden's top goals.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Gannon, considered by many to be a journeyman before he joined Gruden in Oakland. In Rob Johnson and perhaps Shaun King, Gruden has quarterbacks he can mold.

Kiffin and Marinelli also are intense. Kiffin is a master strategist while Marinelli is a determined teacher who needed only half a season to help defensive end Simeon Rice erase the reputation that he couldn't stop the run.

New offensive line coach Bill Muir, formerly of the Jets, is considered one of the best teachers in the game, and he should do wonders for tackles Jerry Wunsch and Kenyatta Walker. **GRADE: A-**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Brad Johnson is very accurate. He sets up quick and deep, which allows him to view the entire field and pick out receivers. He distributes the ball evenly and is smart.

What Johnson doesn't have is the ability to throw deep consistently or the ability to make plays out of nothing with his feet. That's why his hold on the starting job is tenuous—especially with the presence of King and Rob Johnson, both of whom are mobile.

Brad Johnson was sacked 44 times last year and proved to be more durable than

perceived. He also proved to be a satisfactory playmaker, his slow feet notwithstanding. Playing in a very predictable scheme that lacked a serious running threat because of injuries to Mike Alstott and Warrick Dunn, Johnson still managed to complete more than 60 percent of his passes while throwing for 3,400 yards. If he can avoid looking over his shoulder, Johnson should fare even better under Gruden.

If he doesn't, King and Rob Johnson aren't bad options. Both have starting experience and are above-average playmakers. King led the Bucs to the NFC championship game after the 1999 season. Rob Johnson has a rocket arm, though he has a tendency to give up too soon on plays. **GRADE: B**

Running backs—

Losing Dunn, who signed with NFC South rival Atlanta, hurts, but replacement Michael Pittman is a comparable talent who has had similar problems staying healthy. Pittman can break tackles, gain big yards and contribute as a receiver. He's more of a straight-ahead runner than Dunn, which probably suits this offensive line.

After Pittman, there isn't a whole lot of proven talent at tailback. Rookie Travis

Stephens could develop into an every-down back, but he's not ready yet. Aaron Stecker is a slashing-type runner with good vision, but he never has been an NFL contributor.

Of course, Alstott can carry the load if he has to. Alstott is a halfback in a fullback's body. Though Gruden isn't sure what role Alstott will fill, he likes Alstott's versatility. Reserve fullback Jameel Cook is a very good blocker and receiver. He lacks confidence as a runner, but he can contribute in other ways. In time, he could make Alstott expendable. **GRADE: B-**

Receivers—There were questions whether Keyshawn Johnson still belonged in the elite-receiver category before last season, but that changed when the Bucs finally started catering their offense toward him. Gruden has made it a goal to get Johnson more balls in the red zone and the end zone (he caught one touchdown pass last season). Johnson has exceptional size, reach and body control.

The strategy is also something of a necessity, because the Bucs don't really have an ideal complement to Johnson. The other starter likely will be the towering Joe Jurevicius, who is coming off a 51-catch season that was his best in four with the Giants. Jurevicius has deceptive speed and can get open deep if he doesn't get jammed at the line. He needs to run better routes and develop more consistent hands.

Third-round pick Marquise Walker, a big, physical receiver, could be a key to the performance of the receiving unit. If he can be a threat in the middle, it would allow the team to use Johnson more outside as a deep option. The other wideout candidates are Keith Poole, who didn't finish last season in the NFL but has good speed and is fearless; Frank Murphy; and Milton Wynn, a burner with good size who needs to play with more intensity.

Ken Dilger is an upgrade over Dave Moore at tight end. Dilger is sure-handed and a dependable route runner. He blocks well, especially when the play starts with him in motion. Marco Battaglia, another new addition, is a solid receiver. He could be

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
3-86	Marquise Walker	WR	Michigan	Expected to get a shot at the No. 3 wideout job.
4-119	Travis Stephens	RB	Tennessee	May never be a starter but should be a good third-down back.
5-157	Jermaine Phillips	DB	Georgia	Will compete for time at free safety and help on special teams.
6-193	John Stamper	DE	South Carolina	His biggest impact may be as a rusher on the kick-coverage teams.
7-233	Tim Wansley	DB	Georgia	Good in bump-and-run coverage but lacks finishing ability.
7-250	Tracey Wistrom	TE	Nebraska	Has a better chance of making team as a long snapper than a TE.
7-254	Aaron Lockett	WR	Kansas State	Fearless return man could push Karl Williams for the punt-return job.
7-255	Zack Quaccia	C	Stanford	Can play center or guard but needs to drop weight and improve balance.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-12	Warrick Dunn	RB	Florida State	Starter with Falcons
'98	None			
'99-15	Anthony McFarland	DT	LSU	Starter with Buccaneers
'00	None			
'01-14	Kenyatta Walker	OT	Florida	Starter with Buccaneers

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

If you look at the new NFC South, I'd rank them No. 1 in the division. The value that **Jon Gruden** gives them is that the offense is now going to have stability, direction, a philosophy and a guy who's in control and going to run it. ... I'm not sure he has the scrambler in Tampa that he had in Oakland (**Rich Gannon**). **Brad Johnson**, **Rob Johnson** and **Shaun King** have got good arms and can move in the pocket some, but I'm not sure any of them is the scrambler that gets them out of trouble. ... I really like **Michael Pittman**. He's a power back who can run over you and run away from you. He has a little baggage off the field, but I don't think that's a problem. I'm not sure that with Pittman and (rookie) **Travis Stephens** combined, you say that

OUTSIDE



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

VIEW

THE BUCCANEERS

Warrick Dunn can't be replaced and will leave a big hole. ... Beyond **Keyshawn Johnson**, there's not a lot of marquee receivers. I'm not really high on **Joe Jurevicius**. I don't think he's a bad player, but I don't know that he's a difference maker. ... I think they have two quality tight ends (**Marco Battaglia** and **Ken Dilger**) that they might not have had in the past. ... Obviously, defense has been their strength the last few years, and I think it will continue to be. I think the best position, as far as quality right to left and top to bottom, is the defensive line. The area that I think needs to be tweaked some is linebacker. **Derrick Brooks** is a great one, of Pro Bowl quality. But you can't say they've got three marquee linebackers who play really well.

a plus in Gruden's motion-heavy scheme.
GRADE: C+

Line—In Walker, Wunsch, center Jeff Christy and guards Kerry Jenkins and Cosey Coleman, the Bucs probably have the most talented unit in team history. The problem the last couple of seasons has been getting the most out of that talent. It shouldn't be a problem with Muir, who is considered one of the best line coaches in the game.

This unit has the quickness and mobility to get outside and create holes for a runner like Pittman and the power to get the push for a back like Alstott.

In his second year, Walker should develop into a cornerstone player at left tackle. He was tentative at times as a rookie but a

greater comfort level should allow him to consistently display the nasty style he flashed as a college player at Florida.

Coleman seldom makes mistakes, and his footwork and leverage are textbook. He soon should become a dominant run blocker. At right tackle, Wunsch is less skilled but is very willing. He's a steady run blocker and a competent pass protector. Last year, Christy's play dropped a notch below his usual Pro Bowl standards, but in Gruden's motion-heavy scheme, the Bucs will rely heavily on his ability to quickly decipher defensive alignments. Christy can help make this kiddy corps look like a cast of veterans.

Backup Todd Washington can play left guard and is even better at center. Free-agent addition Roman Oben improves the depth at tackle. He has started 78 of 80 games in the last five years, with the Giants and Browns, and can play either tackle spot. **GRADE: C+**

DEFENSE Line—We'll find out if Warren Sapp's play has begun to slip or if last year's struggles (53 tackles, six sacks) were the result of a steadily deteriorating rotator cuff injury that required offseason surgery. The likelihood is Sapp's shoulder problems zapped him of his upper-body strength; the quickness and leg drive he needs to get deep into the backfield still are there. The mere thought of dropping out of the elite class of pass rushers will motivate him to regain his double-digit sack form.

In the final eight games, right end Simeon Rice was the team's best and most-feared lineman. With the help of Marinelli, Rice slowly grew comfortable playing in the team's one-gap scheme and showed he no longer is just a pass rusher. The only challenge may be keeping Rice happy. Since the team regularly rotates its linemen, Rice often was pulled on third downs, something he openly complained about. He has earned the right to play full-time, but he may have to learn to adjust to what has been a

successful platoon system.

Left end Marcus Jones made a disappointing switch from the right side last year. The left side is where the team believes Jones' talents are best suited, but it wasn't until late in the season that he finally began to look comfortable and became productive. If he can pick up where he left off, Jones should approach the double-digit sack figure he produced two years ago. Since Jones doesn't have a lot of pass-rush moves, he must beat his man with a good first step.

Nose tackle
Anthony McFarland was the team's most consistent lineman last year, but he did not have the breakthrough many thought he would. That could come this year, as McFarland knows the league now. McFarland still tends to give up big plays when

runners come right at him, but few linemen chase down a ballcarrier better.

Chartric Darby is very quick and could play for either Sapp or McFarland in a pinch. The loss of Steve White could prove damaging. The team likes to rotate its ends, and White was a quality third end. Ellis Wymys is learning, but he's not quite in White's class. **GRADE: A-**

Linebackers—With the exception of Pro Bowl weakside linebacker Derrick Brooks, this is an unheralded group. But that doesn't mean it's not productive. Shelton Quarles, Alshermont Singleton and Nate Webster may not have instantly recognizable names, but their quickness and ability to adhere to the guidelines of Kiffin's ballhawking

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Brad Johnson will begin the season as the starting quarterback, but Rob Johnson and Shaun King both will get a chance to jump-start the offense at some point.
2. The team will not start 3-4 like it traditionally did under Tony Dungy. But Jon Gruden's intensity and drive will wear the players down and lead to a 3-4 finish.
3. DT Warren Sapp will rebound from a subpar season and lead the team in sacks with 16. His supposedly strained relationship with WR Keyshawn Johnson will remain a topic of conversation but won't be a big distraction.
4. Johnson again will be among the league's leading receivers, and this time he'll have a healthy number of touchdowns (let's say eight).
5. RB Michael Pittman will gain 1,500 total yards, score 10 touchdowns and get Pro Bowl consideration.



B. Johnson

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Dallas	W	10-6
Sept. 23	Open date		
Sept. 30	at Minnesota	L	16-20
Oct. 7	GREEN BAY	W	14-10
Oct. 14	at Ten. (OT)	L	28-31
Oct. 21	PITTSBURGH	L	10-17
Oct. 28	MINNESOTA	W	41-14
Nov. 4	at Green Bay	L	20-21
Nov. 11	at Detroit	W	20-17
Nov. 18	CHICAGO	L	24-27
Nov. 26	at St. Louis	W	24-17
Dec. 2	at Cin. (OT)	W	16-13
Dec. 9	DETROIT	W	15-12
Dec. 16	at Chicago	L	3-27
Dec. 23	NEW ORLEANS	W	48-21
Dec. 29	BALTIMORE	W	22-10
Jan. 6	PHILADELPHIA	L	13-17
Jan. 12	at Philadelphia*	L	9-31

*NFC playoff game.

Moves

Key additions

TE Marco Battaglia
TE Ken Dilger
OL Kerry Jenkins
QB Rob Johnson
WR Joe Jurevicius
OL Roman Oben
RB Michael Pittman

Free agent/Redskins
Free agent/Colts
Free agent/Jets
Free agent/Bills
Free agent/Giants
Free agent/Browns
Free agent/Cardinals

Key losses

RB Rabin Abdullah
CB Donnie Abraham
WR Reidel Anthony
LB Jamie Duncan
RB Warrick Dunn
LB Jeff Gooch
WR Jacques Green
G Randall McDaniel
TE Sean McDermott
TE Dave Moore
P Mark Royals
DE Steve White

Free agent/Bears
Free agent/Jets
Free agent/Redskins
Free agent/Rams
Free agent/Falcons
Free agent/Lions
Free agent/Redskins
Retired
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Bills
Free agent/Dolphins
Free agent/Jets

Stadium/Media

Raymond James Stadium (65,699, grass).

Ticket information: 813-879-2827.

Training site: To be announced.

Radio: WQYK-FM (99.5).

Website: www.buccaneers.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 9-7 (3rd in NFC Central); 4-4 in division; 7-5 in conference; 2-2 vs. AFC; 5-3 at home; 4-4 on road; 3-1 on artificial turf; 6-6 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Lost to Philadelphia, 31-9, in NFC wild-card game.

Jon Gruden's regular-season record: First season with Buccaneers; 38-26 overall in four seasons with Raiders.

Gruden's postseason record: 2-2 in two appearances with Raiders.

Team record last five years: 48-32 (.600, ranks T7th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 1998.

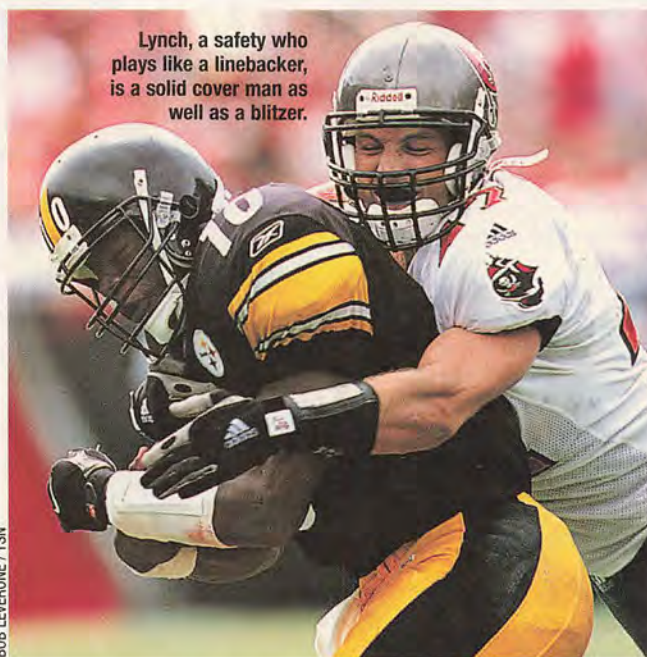
Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*293.4	T11	T26
Rushing offense	*85.7	15	30
Passing offense	*207.7	9	15
Scoring offense	324	7	15
Total defense	*290.8	3	6
Rushing defense	*106.4	5	12
Passing defense	*184.4	3	5
Scoring defense	280	5	8
Takeaways	39	T1	T2
Giveaways	22	2	5
Turnover differential	17	1	2
Sacks	42	7	12
Sacks allowed	47	T11	T24

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coch	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. team
Jon Gruden	Head coach	12	1
Rod Marinelli	Asst. head coach/def. line	7	7
Bill Muir	Off. coordinator/off. line	21	1
Monte Kiffin	Defensive coordinator	20	7
Joe Barry	Linebackers	3	2
Jeremy Bates	Offensive quality control	1	1
Richard Bisaccia	Special teams	1	1
Michael Christianson	Asst. off. line/off. QC	1	1
Richard Mann	Wide receivers	21	1
Mike Morris	Asst. strength & cond.	4	1
Raheem Morris	Defensive quality control	1	1
Johnny Parker	Strength & conditioning	17	1
Stan Parrish	Quarterbacks	1	1
Mike Tomlin	Defensive backs	2	2
Art Valero	Tight ends	4	1
Kirby Wilson	Running backs	5	1



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Lynch, a safety who plays like a linebacker, is a solid cover man as well as a blitzer.

scheme allow them to be an effective group.

Brooks, who can chase down any ballcarrier and is very solid in coverage, is the leader, but the Bucs need to get back to a system where their middle linebacker runs the defense. They haven't had a player like that since Hardy Nickerson, and it's uncertain whether Quarles, who moves from the strong side, fills the bill. Though Quarles recognizes offensive changes quickly and adapts to them well, he's not very vocal.

If Quarles isn't the answer in the middle, Webster may be. Webster may be the most intense player on the team. He is a very hard hitter but has trouble channeling his aggression and keeping his cool. That has to change. The Bucs envisioned Webster being their starter in the middle by his third year; he's just about on target.

The only person more quiet than Quarles is Singleton, who has proved to be quite a playmaker. Singleton must adjust to playing a full-time role on the strong side. He has platooned on the outside with Quarles the last couple years and is ready for the extra work. He's outstanding in coverage but needs to be stronger against the run.

Brooks just needs to stay healthy. He struggled with a foot sprain most of last season. He used the offseason to recover and should be back in top form. If he's not, this unit could struggle to prevent giving up big plays. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—Are the Bucs' defensive backs good players or players who simply fit well and play great within a cover 2 scheme that disguises their flaws? The answer lies somewhere in between.

Pro Bowl cornerback Ronde Barber, for example, excels in the zone-based system. But he has an advantage against most receivers because he works so hard on his fundamentals and in the film room. His 10

interceptions last year are proof.

The same goes for strong safety John Lynch. Lynch, who remains one of the game's hardest hitters, has worked hard at becoming one of its smartest players. Lynch still plays the position like a linebacker, blitzing often and relentlessly and blowing up running games with his gap-filling speed and quickness. He has become a solid cover man as well.

Lynch plays alongside Dexter Jackson, who still is feeling his way a bit at free safety.

Jackson is funda-

mentally sound, especially when the ball is in the air, but the team would like to see him make more big plays. He is athletic enough to play corner, but his coverage skills have to improve.

Brian Kelly, who nearly pushed Barber out of a starter's job at right corner two years ago, made Donnie Abraham expendable. Kelly, who didn't intercept a pass last year, has yet to prove he's the playmaker Abraham was. But Kelly is a more consistent cover cornerback, which the team appreciates.

There is an abundance of depth in the secondary. Dwight Smith, another solid cover corner, should be the nickel back, and the team will not hesitate to play John Howell at free safety if Jackson falters. David Gibson is considered the heir apparent to Lynch, but he needs to play better on special teams to assure himself a place in the lineup. **GRADE: B**

SPECIAL TEAMS

In Murphy, Stecker and Smith, the Bucs have the same players vying for the kickoff-return job as they did a year ago, when Murphy more or less emerged as the winner by default.

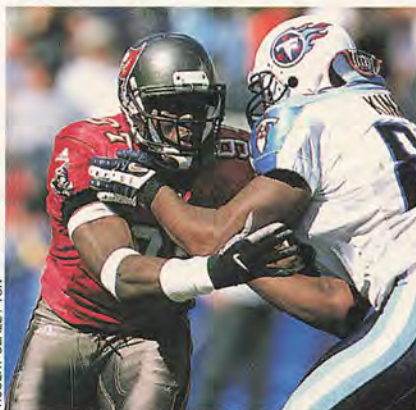
Stecker, who has game-breaking speed and did break off an 86-yard return, took too many risks, and Smith simply couldn't hold on to the ball. He bobbled or dropped several early in the season before being relegated to the sideline.

The team would like to make an upgrade over veteran Karl Williams as the punt returner, but Williams at least is steady and sure-handed enough to keep the team out of trouble.

Martin Gramatica makes the kicking game a strength. He is very reliable from 50 yards and closer and has the ability to make kicks from 60 yards. He is, however, a little

REALIGNMENT reality

The Buccaneers, who won the NFC Central three times in 25 years, figure to be the favorite in the NFC South for years. They are the only division member that has made the playoffs consistently in recent seasons—four times in the last five years—and the addition of coach Jon Gruden, tight end Ken Dilger and running back Michael Pittman should make them better. The Bucs are no more than 90 minutes by air from each of their division rivals, two of which play indoors. That figures to make the Bucs even tougher, because the speed they rely on defensively is enhanced by turf. The idea of playing Carolina or Atlanta—either at home or on the road—is far less daunting than that of playing the Packers in Green Bay or the Vikings in Minneapolis. If anything, the Bucs may have a hard time getting up for some of the division games. They should be seasoned enough, however, to avoid such letdowns.



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

Rice adapted to the Bucs' one-gap scheme and showed he can be more than just a pass rusher.

inconsistent on kickoffs. Gramatica has the strength to drive the ball deep but only on a line, which has made it difficult for the Bucs' sloppy coverage unit.

Dave Leaverton is the most likely candidate to replace Mark Royals as the punter. Leaverton consistently kicked 41 yards with good hang time in college. If he can do that in the NFL, the team will not consider this an area of weakness.

The team probably won't decide until training camp on a long snapper. One possibility is rookie tight end Tracey Wistrom, brother of Rams defensive end Grant Wistrom. Look for Brad Johnson to replace Royals as the holder. **GRADE: C**

BOTTOM LINE The Bucs long have been a team with a Super Bowl-caliber defense and a suspect offense. But that shouldn't be the case anymore. Gruden's scheme, the addition of Dilger and the development of the offensive line should allow them to score more points. The Bucs will have to stay healthy, especially on defense, because they don't have a lot of depth. If they can, though, they should be able to win the NFC South. With a break or two, they could win the NFC championship and reach the Super Bowl.

TSN

Roy Cummings covers the Buccaneers for the Tampa Tribune.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Joe Jurevicius
	■ Marquise Walker
LT	■ Kenyatta Walker
	□ Pete Pierson
LG	■ Kerry Jenkins
	■ Todd Washington
C	● Jeff Christy
	■ Todd Washington
RG	● Cooley Coleman
	□ Russ Hochstein
RT	■ Jerry Wunsch
	■ Roman Oben
TE	■ Ken Dilger
	■ Marco Battaglia
WR	● Keyshawn Johnson
	□ Keith Poole
QB	■ Brad Johnson
	■ Shaun King
RB	■ Michael Pittman
	■ Travis Stephens
FB	■ Mike Alstott
	■ Jameel Cook

Defense

LE	■ Marcus Jones
	□ Greg Spires
NT	● Anthony McFarland
	None
DT	● Warren Sapp
	□ Chartric Darby
RE	● Simeon Rice
	■ Marcus Jones
SLB	■ Al Singleton
	■ Shelton Quarles
MLB	■ Shelton Quarles
	■ Nate Webster
WLB	● Derrick Brooks
	□ Jack Golden
LCB	■ Brian Kelly
	■ Dwight Smith
RCB	● Ronde Barber
	■ Brian Kelly
SS	● John Lynch
	□ David Gibson
FS	□ Dexter Jackson
	□ John Howell

Specialists

K	● Martin Gramatica
P	□ Dave Leaverton
KR	■ Aaron Stecker
PR	■ Karl Williams
LS	□ Tracey Wistrom
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

BUCCANEERS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
14	Johnson, Brad	6-5/226	9-13-68	11	Florida State	UFA/01	16/16
11	Johnson, Rob	6-4/212	3-18-73	8	Southern California	FA/02	8/8
10	King, Shaun	6-0/225	5-29-77	4	Tulane	D2/99	3/0

Running backs

40	Alstott, Mike (FB)	6-1/248	12-21-73	7	Purdue	D2/96	16/16
43	Cook, Jameel (FB)	5-10/237	2-8-79	2	Illinois	D6a/01	16/3
32	Pittman, Michael	6-0/216	8-14-75	5	Fresno State	UFA/02	15/14
27	Stecker, Aaron	5-10/205	11-13-75	3	Western Illinois	FA/00	13/0
36	Stephens, Travis	5-8/194	6-26-78	R	Tennessee	D4/02	—

Receivers

81	Battaglia, Marco (TE)	6-3/248	1-25-73	7	Rutgers	UFA/02	11/1
	Dilger, Ken (TE)	6-5/255	2-2-71	8	Illinois	FA/02	16/16
19	Johnson, Keyshawn	6-4/212	7-22-72	7	Southern California	T-NYJ/00	15/15
	Jurevicius, Joe	6-5/230	12-23-74	5	Penn State	UFA/02	14/9
8	Lockett, Aaron	5-7/155	9-6-78	R	Kansas State	D7c/02	—
87	Murphy, Frank	6-0/206	2-11-77	2	Kansas State	FA/00	11/0
83	Poole, Keith	6-0/193	6-18-74	6	Arizona State	FA/01	6/3
89	Roberg, Mike (TE)	6-4/263	9-18-77	1	Idaho	W-Car/01	1/0
4	Walker, Marquise	6-2/219	12-11-78	R	Michigan	D3/02	—
86	Williams, Karl	5-10/177	4-10-71	7	Texas A&M-Kingsville	FA/96	15/3
49	Wistrom, Tracey (TE)	6-4/245	8-28-78	R	Nebraska	D7b/02	—
88	Wynn, Milton	6-2/207	9-21-78	2	Washington State	W-SIL/01	1/0
80	Yoder, Todd (TE)	6-4/250	3-18-78	3	Vanderbilt	FA/00	16/1

Offensive linemen

62	Christy, Jeff (C)	6-2/285	2-3-69	10	Pittsburgh	UFA/00	15/15
60	Coleman, Cooley (G)	6-4/322	10-27-78	3	Tennessee	D2/00	16/16
68	Grice, Shane (G)	6-1/307	12-20-76	2	Mississippi	FA/01	1/0
65	Hochstein, Russ (G)	6-4/300	10-7-77	2	Nebraska	D5/01	0/0
70	Jenkins, Kerry (G)	6-5/305	9-6-73	5	Troy State	UFA/02	16/16
	Oben, Roman (T)	6-4/305	10-9-72	7	Louisville	FA/02	16/14
69	Pierson, Pete (T)	6-5/315	2-4-71	8	Washington	D5/94	16/0
61	Quaccia, Zack (G)	6-4/309	4-20-79	R	Stanford	D7d/02	—
67	Walker, Kenyatta (T)	6-5/302	2-1-79	2	Florida	D1/01	16/16
75	Washington, Todd (C)	6-3/324	7-19-76	5	Virginia Tech	D4/98	15/1
71	Wunsch, Jerry (T)	6-6/339	1-21-74	6	Wisconsin	D2/97	16/16

Defensive linemen

91	Darby, Chartric (T)	6-0/270	10-22-75	2	South Carolina State	FA/99	13/0
78	Jones, Marcus (E)	6-6/278	8-15-73	7	North Carolina	D1b/96	15/15
92	McFarland, Anthony (T)	6-0/300	12-18-77	4	Louisiana State	D1/99	14/14
97	Rice, Simeon (E)	6-5/268	2-24-74	7	Illinois	UFA/01	16/16
99	Sapp, Warren (T)	6-2/303	12-19-72	8	Miami (Fla.)	D1a/95	16/16
94	Spikes, Greg (E)	6-1/265	8-12-74	5	Florida State	UFA/02	16/4
95	Stamper, John (E)	6-4/265	8-30-78	R	South Carolina	D6/02	—
96	Wynms, Ellis (E)	6-3/279	4-12-79	2	Mississippi State	D6b/01	4/0

Linebackers

55	Brooks, Derrick	6-0/235	4-18-73	8	Florida State	D1b/95	16/16
58	Golden, Jack	6-1/240	1-28-77	3	Oklahoma State	W-NYG/02	16/0
53	Quarles, Shelton	6-1/225	9-11-71	6	Vanderbilt	FA/97	16/16
51	Singleton, Alshermund	6-2/228	8-7-75	6	Temple	D4/97	16/0
52	Webster, Nate	5-11/225	11-29-77	3	Miami (Fla.)	D3/00	16/1

Defensive backs

20	Barber, Ronde (CB)	5-10/184	4-7-75	6	Virginia	D3b/97	16/16
22	Gibson, David (S)	6-1/210	11-5-77	3	Southern California	D6/00	13/0
38	Howell, John (S)	5-11/204	4-28-78	2	Colorado State	D4/01	14/1
35	Ivy, Corey (CB)	5-8/183	3-29-77	1	Oklahoma	FA/01	1/0
34	Jackson, Dexter (S)	6-1/203	7-28-77	4	Florida State	D4/99	15/15
25	Kelly, Brian (CB)	5-11/193	1-14-76	5	Southern California	D2b/98	16/11
47	Lynch, John (S)	6-2/220	9-25-71	10	Stanford	D3/93	16/16
33	Phillips, Jermaine (S)	6-1/214	3-27-79	R	Georgia	D5/02	—
26	Smith, Dwight (CB)	5-10/201	8-13-78	2	Akron	D3/01	15/0
31	Wansley, Tim (CB)	5-8/180	11-11-78	R	Georgia	D7a/02	—

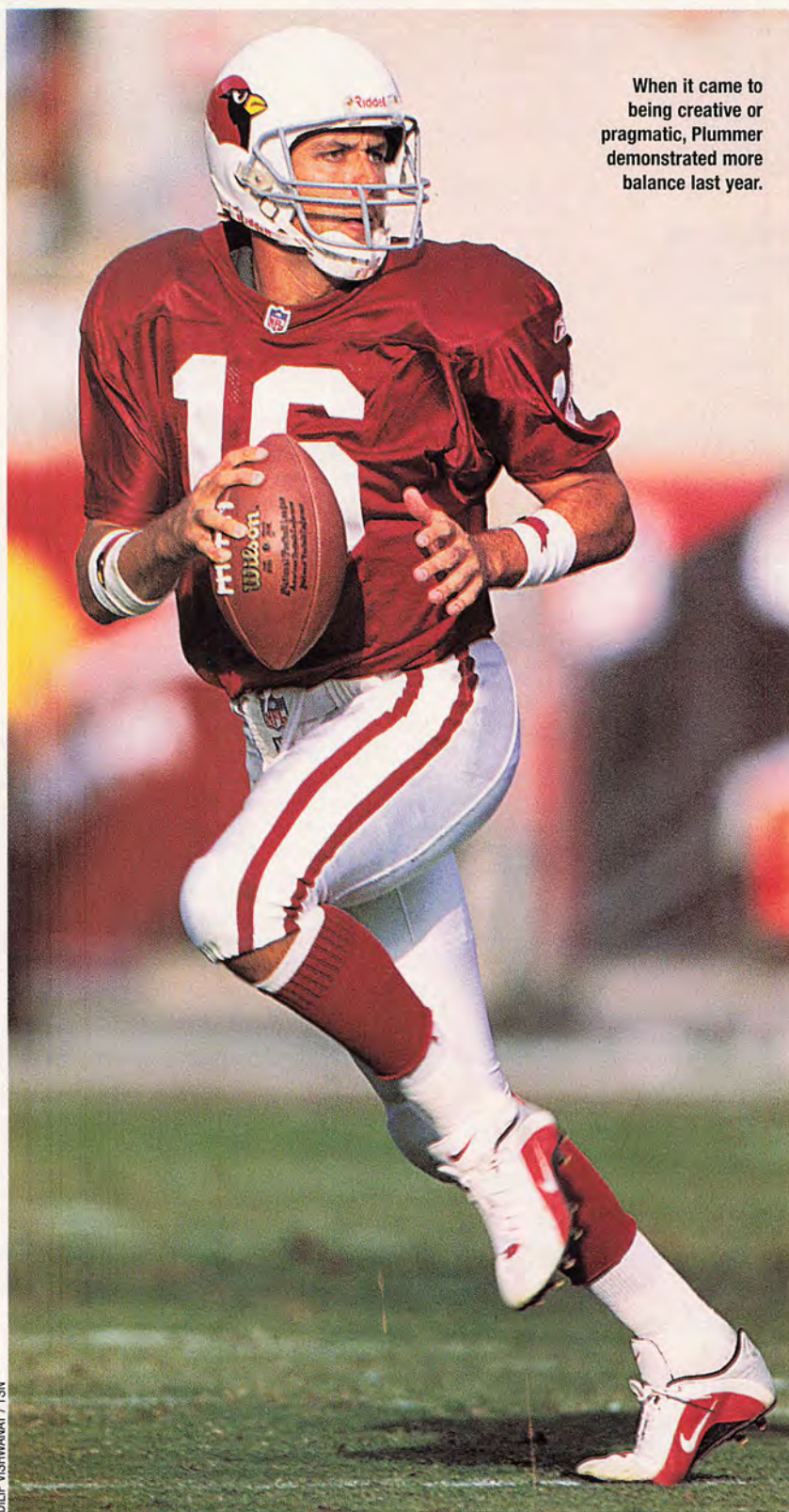
Specialists

7	Gramatica, Martin (K)	5-8/170	11-27-75	4	Kansas State	D3/99	14/0
6	Leaverton, Dave (P)	6-4/210	4-1-78	1	Tennessee	T-NYJ/02	—

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: CB Corey Chamblin, WR E.G. Green, QB Joe Hamilton, RB Byron Hanzard, LB Eugene McCaslin, CB Anthony Midget, TE Damian Vaughn, DE Ron Warner. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Cardinals



When it came to being creative or pragmatic, Plummer demonstrated more balance last year.

BY KENT SOMERS

Dave McGinnis has been equal parts football coach and revivalist since ascending to the Cardinals' top job in December 2000. But he knows that just telling people a miracle is forthcoming won't win converts. They want to see the miracle. It's questionable whether the Cardinals are good enough to deliver, but they are making progress.

In 2001, McGinnis' first full season as head coach, the team made some painful roster decisions to regain control of their salary-cap situation. The team exceeded all expectations, finishing 7-9—a four-game improvement from 2000.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8 at Washington	1:00	Nov. 10 SEATTLE	4:05
Sept. 15 at Seattle	4:05	Nov. 17 at Philadelphia	1:00
Sept. 22 SAN DIEGO	4:05	Nov. 24 OAKLAND	4:05
Sept. 29 N.Y. GIANTS	4:05	Dec. 1 at Kansas City	1:00
Oct. 6 at Carolina	1:00	Dec. 8 DETROIT	4:05
Oct. 13 Open date		Dec. 15 at St. Louis	8:30
Oct. 20 DALLAS	4:15	Dec. 21 S. FRAN. (Sat.)	5:00
Oct. 27 at San Fran.	4:05	Dec. 29 at Denver	4:15
Nov. 3 ST. LOUIS	4:15	Strength of schedule: 10th	

This offseason, McGinnis turned his attention to bolstering the defense. The team hopes free-agent acquisition Duane Starks will be a premier cornerback and rookie defensive tackle Wendell Bryant—the 12th overall pick in draft—can provide a push up the middle. That, combined with the return of right end Kyle Vanden Bosch from knee surgery, should help an anemic pass rush.

The offense, which showed improvement last season, should fit in well in the high-powered NFC West. Freddie Jones, another key free-agent acquisition, gives the team a threat at tight end that it hasn't had since Jay Novacek in the late 1980s.

Receiver David Boston is coming off a breakout season, and quarterback Jake Plummer showed progress last year.

McGinnis says the Cardinals can take another step and make the playoffs "if we continue to build on what we started. We can't think that because we won seven games that the next step just automatically comes. That's the mistake a lot of people make."

It won't be easy. The running game is questionable, and there still isn't a proven pass rusher on the roster. But McGinnis likes the enthusiasm and work ethic of this team. It was evident during the offseason when the parking lot at the team's facility was full of players' vehicles. "I know when I have to park between two SUVs in the morning, I'm in good shape," McGinnis says.

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

This is a team that is going to surprise some people. I think they do a heck of a job coaching and getting their players to play for them. Now, if they can keep **David Boston** out of trouble ... Here's a talented individual, a Pro Bowl player, who has kind of detracted from the agenda a little bit. That's the thing you don't need with a young, upcoming team. ... They've got just an unbelievable offensive line, potentially as close to a premier line as anyone in the league. It's a good mix of young guys and mature guys. **Leonard Davis** is a special guy, whether he plays guard or tackle. And the fact that you play him at guard says that your tackles, **L.J. Shelton** and **Anthony Clement**, are doing fine. ... I think **Jake Plummer** is mobile enough, has adequate arm

OUTSIDE



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

VIEW

THE CARDINALS

strength and good enough accuracy where he can do the things within the system to run their offense. Some of the comparisons made about him early in his career might have been a little bit unfair, and I think he tried to do some things that maybe slowed his growth a little bit. There were times when he became more of a gambler than what he had to be. ... This is going to be the year where **Thomas Jones** has to prove he is a feature running back. I don't think he has great size, but he's got a little better toughness than what you think. ... The addition of **Duane Starks** gives them the potential of having a shutdown corner. I don't think he's a physical corner, but he will give them some experience and coverage ability.

COACHING Strategies—In his first season with the team last year, offensive coordinator Rich Olson installed a scheme that proved much easier for the team to understand and execute than the West Coast offense used in previous years. Plummer had less to think about, and the passing game was based more on timing than before. Olson wanted to build the offense around the ability to run, but that didn't work out for various reasons. The offensive line was inconsistent early in the season, running backs missed holes and there were injuries at tight end.

There must be major improvement in the running game this season. A key to that will be the addition of Jones, who has the ability

to be one of the best receiving tight ends in the league. The Cardinals also hope Jones can be an adequate blocker who can seal off defensive tackles and ends.

Defensive coordinator Larry Marmie did a masterful job last season with minimal talent. Content to give yards but not points, Marmie mixed coverages and blitzes well and motivated a young, inexperienced group to overachieve.

Late in the season, the Cardinals hit upon a personnel grouping that paid dividends for them. They inserted safety Adrian Wilson and removed a defensive lineman, giving them more of a 3-4 look. Getting Wilson in the game was key because he gave the defense speed and athletic ability that it otherwise was missing.

The key will be upgrading the talent. Schemes only can cover those deficiencies for so long. The lack of a pass rush last year was particularly apparent late in games when opponents drove for critical scores.

Style—McGinnis is a master motivator, and he's a perfect fit for a club that again will be one of the youngest in the league. He's a hands-on coach—literally. He hugs. He slaps backs. And when he's critical, he does it face to face.

Olson is more subdued, but he'll snap in practice occasionally when his patience has been tried. He and quarterbacks coach Geep Chryst are a good combination. Olson has coddled Plummer less than some past coaches, while the outgoing Chryst is more of a friend and confidant. Marmie is like Olson in that there is no pretense about him. He's an excellent teacher who jumps into drills to instruct, criticize or praise. The players respect him and respond to him.

Receivers coach Jerry Sullivan is one of the best teachers in the game, and he's confident in his ability to develop young players. He has a specific method of teaching route-running, and players had better follow it. Sullivan gets along well with his players, but

he is demanding. His instruction was a key reason for Boston's development last season. Perhaps the key members of the staff this year will be the two line coaches. Offensive line coach George Warhop has the same starters as last season, and the team has invested heavily in all five positions. Defensive line coach Joe Greene has a young group to work with, and its development is key to the team's fortunes.

GRADE: B

2001 results

Sept. 9	Open date		
Sept. 23	DENVER	L	17-38
Sept. 30	ATLANTA	L	14-34
Oct. 7	at Philadelphia	W	21-20
Oct. 14	at Chicago	L	13-20
Oct. 21	KANSAS CITY	W	24-16
Oct. 28	at Dallas	L	3-17
Nov. 4	PHILADELPHIA	L	7-21
Nov. 11	N.Y. GIANTS	L	10-17
Nov. 18	DETROIT	W	45-38
Nov. 25	at San Diego	W	20-17
Dec. 2	at Oakland (OT)	W	34-31
Dec. 9	WASHINGTON	L	10-20
Dec. 15	at N.Y. Giants	L	13-17
Dec. 23	DALLAS	W	17-10
Dec. 30	at Carolina	W	30-7
Jan. 6	at Washington	L	17-20

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. SS Adrian Wilson's speed and athletic ability will help him emerge as one of the game's bright young players.
2. Freddie Jones will become the best tight end the team has had in a decade. Jake Plummer now has an outlet when he's in trouble.
3. The pass rush will be suspect. RE Kyle Vanden Bosch is good, and DT Wendell Bryant was a solid first-round choice. But the team lacks an elite pass rusher.
4. Defensive coordinator Larry Marmie will have two great chess matches with old friend Mike Martz. Unless Marmie devises a spectacular plan to deal with a wealth of talent on the Rams' roster, Martz will prevail both times over his former boss at Arizona State.
5. The Cardinals will get off to a slow start, as usual. They haven't had a winning record in the first month since their first season in Arizona, 1988.



Wilson

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—

Plummer bounced back from two horrible seasons to prove he can be competent. For the first time in his career, Plummer had more touchdown passes (18) than interceptions (14). Modest numbers, but a sign of progress after Plummer's interception total doubled his touchdown passes in the previous two seasons.

Plummer always has presented coaches with a quandary. He's at his worst when he's trying to make something out of nothing because that's when he makes poor decisions. Yet he's at his best when the situation is the most chaotic. Often, he's faced with a difficult choice between being creative and pragmatic.

Last year, Plummer began to balance the two better. He would be helped if the team

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finally is able to run the ball and doesn't have to rely on its quarterback for so many big plays.

McGinnis remains firmly behind Plummer, yet a change might not be far away. Plummer is entering the last year of a four-year contract.

The Cardinals are starting to look toward the future at the position. Veteran Dave Brown, Plummer's backup the last three seasons, wasn't re-signed. Chris Greisen, who has thrown 16 passes in three years, is the backup. And the team drafted Josh McCown out of Sam Houston State in the third round.

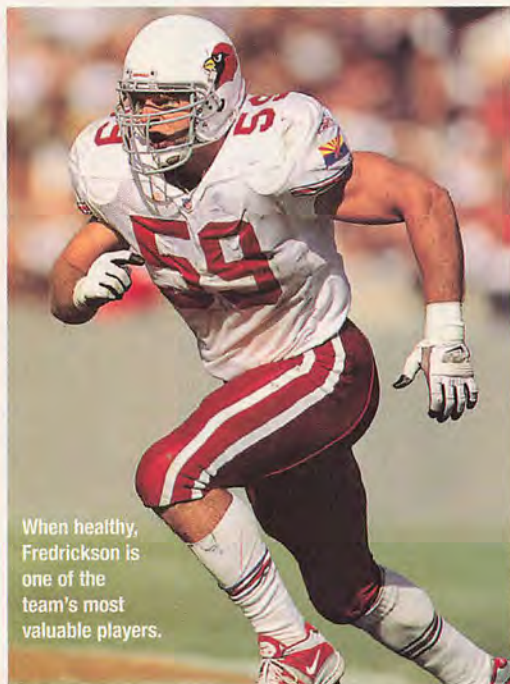
McGinnis knows he must decide about Greisen this season and plans to take a long look at him in the preseason. And the team is intrigued by McCown, a big, athletic quarterback with an adequate arm. **GRADE: C**

Running backs—The biggest risk the club is taking this year is handing Thomas Jones the starting job at running back. Jones, the seventh overall pick in the 2000 draft, opened each of his two seasons as the No. 1 back, only to quickly lose the job to Michael Pittman. Pittman left as a free agent, and there's no experience behind Jones, who hasn't performed well in the spotlight.

Jones has missed holes while appearing tentative and lacking confidence. In his rookie season, Jones was hampered by an illness that affected his breathing. It carried into last season, though it didn't affect him as much.

Jones started to show improvement late last year. He was more patient, waiting for holes and creases to develop, and particularly was effective in goal-line situations.

Behind Jones, the club has several young faces. Backup Marcel Shipp isn't a burner, but he reads blocks well and has the poten-



When healthy, Fredrickson is one of the team's most valuable players.

DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

tial to be an adequate backup. The club drafted Josh Scobey in the sixth round. He has great speed but doesn't elude many tacklers. Undrafted rookie Damien Anderson has a good chance to make the club.

Again, the team will use its fullback as a glorified guard. The coaches apparently are content with Joel Makovicka and Dennis McKinley because they didn't try to upgrade the position in the offseason. **GRADE: C**

Receivers—Boston emerged as one of the game's best young players last season, leading the NFL in receiving yards (1,598) and earning his first Pro Bowl berth.

Much was made of Boston's maturation. In previous seasons, he developed a reputation for loafing on some plays and for taunting opponents. He clearly progressed last season.

But he didn't put his troubles behind

him. Boston was investigated this offseason for driving under the influence and tested positive for cocaine. He faces punishment by the league that could include fines and suspension. Losing him would be a big blow to the Cardinals, who don't have another receiver capable of assuming the No. 1 spot. Frank Sanders is a decent No. 2 receiver, and MarTay Jenkins still is learning the position. With other more pressing needs, the club didn't address the position until the fifth round of the draft, when it took Jason McAddley out of Alabama. Though he is big and fast, McAddley's receiving skills are raw.

At tight end, the Cardinals should be better than they have been in years. Jones gives them a receiving threat they've rarely had, and he should excel in this system. It's the same one he played in last year with San Diego under coordinator Norv Turner. Backup Steve Bush is a decent blocker but not much of a receiver. Tywan Mitchell is just the opposite. It wouldn't be a shock to see seventh-round choice Mike Banks beat out one of them. **GRADE: B+**

Line—Judging by the size of the paychecks, this should be the team's anchor. The Cardinals spent heavily the last two years to build what they hope is a formidable group, and all five starters are under contract for at least two more seasons.

The middle of the line was upgraded last season with free-agent guard Pete Kendall and rookie guard/tackle Leonard Davis. Kendall played well until suffering a foot injury in early December. He had surgery and is expected to be ready for the start of the season. Davis showed that he could develop into an All-Pro, though he sometimes had trouble picking up stunts. Center Mike Gruttadauria bounced back with a solid season after undergoing neck surgery.

The biggest improvement up front must come on the outside. Right tackle Anthony Clement was inconsistent early, though he showed much improvement later in the year. He and Davis should open some holes on the right side. Clement sometimes has trouble handling speed rushers.

Left tackle L.J. Shelton didn't play well through the first half of the season but improved in the final eight games. Coaches believe most of Shelton's problems stem from a lack of concentration. He seems to play well against the better ends and struggle against lesser ones. There are options if Shelton doesn't improve. Davis was drafted with the idea that he eventually would move to tackle, and the team could replace him at guard with Chris Dishman, a periodic starter for the past few seasons. **GRADE: B+**

DEFENSE Line—The group received high marks last season for work ethic and intensity, but those qualities didn't compensate for a lack of talent. The Cardinals had only 19 sacks and didn't pressure quarterbacks often enough. The team still doesn't have a proven pass rusher. Right

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-12	Wendell Bryant	DT	Wisconsin	Club likes his commitment to game, expects him to be a cornerstone.
2-49	Levar Fisher	LB	NC State	Loves the game and loves to hit, but size and injuries are a concern.
3-81	Josh McCown	QB	Sam Houston St.	He's in an ideal spot; Cardinals are looking to develop a young QB.
3-98	Dennis Johnson	DE	Kentucky	Needs to work on basketball-type body; won't play much this year.
4-113	Nate Dwyer	DT	Kansas	A powerful run stuffer, but his playing time could be sparse.
5-149	Jason McAddley	WR	Alabama	Very fast, but receiving skills need work; will contend for No. 4 spot.
6-185	Josh Scobey	RB	Kansas State	A tough runner with good speed, but critics say he's not elusive.
7-223	Mike Banks	TE	Iowa State	Not a great receiver, but club likes his blocking skills.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-9	Tom Knight	CB	Iowa	Backup with Patriots
'98-3	Andre Wadsworth	DE	Florida State	Out of football
'99-8	David Boston	WR	Ohio State	Starter with Cardinals
'99-21	L.J. Shelton	OT	Eastern Michigan	Starter with Cardinals
'00-7	Thomas Jones	RB	Virginia	Starter with Cardinals
'01-2	Leonard Davis	OT	Texas	Starter with Cardinals

end Vanden Bosch showed promise until he suffered a season-ending knee injury after the third game.

Two undrafted free agents, Fred Wakefield and Andy Bowers, started games at end, and the starting tackles, Russell Davis and Barron Tanner, were castoffs from other teams.

That's why the team drafted Bryant, who becomes an immediate starter on the right side. Bryant is a natural tackle, but coaches might use him at end in passing situations.

Third-round pick Dennis Johnson also will get a look as a pass-rushing specialist, but he needs to increase his upper-body strength. Several young players, including fourth-round pick Nate Dwyer and second-

to keep linemen off him. His backup likely will be Michael Young, who spent most of last season on the practice squad.

There will be some intense competition at the left outside spot. Starter Raynoch Thompson is back after playing decently last season. But he's just 217 pounds, so durability always is a question.

Second-round pick Levar Fisher figures to get a lot of playing time. At 228 pounds, he has great speed and might be able to rush the passer in certain situations. Once he learns the system, it will be hard to keep him off the field because of his versatility.

Depth is a big concern here. The Cardinals struggled last season when Fredrickson had to drop out of the nickel package, and there is no experienced backup at middle linebacker. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—The Cardinals are younger, faster and—they hope—better than last season. Both starting cornerbacks from last season, Tom Knight and Corey Chavous, left as free agents. The Cardinals wanted to upgrade those spots, and they spent dearly to do it. They signed Starks to a five-year, \$23 million free-agent contract that included a \$5 million signing bonus. But the team was desperate for an elite cover corner who could take away half the field. And they expect Starks, who came from Baltimore, to provide that. With him, the Cardinals will be able use a greater variety of coverages than they did last season, when they mostly used zones.

The other cornerback spot is up for grabs. The starter entering camp will be David Barrett, a third-year pro who played a lot in his first two seasons. If Barrett falters, the coaches will turn to a young player such as Renaldo Hill or Michael Stone.

The addition of Starks drew considerable attention, but the biggest development in the secondary likely is to be the insertion of Wilson into the starting lineup. A third-round pick in 2001, he has the athletic ability to become a star. Wilson likely will become the starting strong safety, replacing Pat Tillman, but Wilson is so gifted that he could start at cornerback opposite Starks. Free safety Kwamie Lassiter was re-signed after a Pro Bowl-caliber season in which he intercepted nine passes. **GRADE: B**

SPECIAL TEAMS Kicker Bill Gramatica ran the gamut of emotions in his rookie season. He made two game-winning field goals but suffered a season-ending knee injury in early December after leaping to celebrate a first-quarter field goal. He's expected to be healthy by the season opener, but if he isn't ready, the Cardinals could turn to undrafted rookie Tim Duncan or find a veteran as a temporary fix.

Punter Scott Player is coming off another solid season and excels under special teams coach Hank Kuhlmann. Player has emerged as one of the league's best since the Cardinals went to a directional punting scheme a few years ago.

Moves

Key additions

TE Freddie Jones	Free agent/Chargers
CB Duane Starks	Free agent/Ravens

Key losses

CB Corey Chavous	Free agent/Vikings
LB James Folston	Free agent
TE Terry Hardy	Free agent
DE Jabari Issa	Expansion draft/Texans
LS Trey Junkin	Free agent
CB Tom Knight	Free agent/Patriots
WR Rob Moore	Free agent/Broncos
RB Michael Pittman	Free agent/Buccaneers
G Yusuf Scott	Free agent

Stadium/Media

Sun Devil Stadium (73,243, grass).

Ticket information: 602-379-0101.

Training site: Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Ariz.; 520-523-1818.

Radio: KDUS-AM (1060), KSLX-FM (100.7).

Website: www.azcardinals.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 7-9 (4th in NFC East); 2-6 in division; 4-8 in conference; 3-1 vs. AFC; 3-5 at home; 4-4 on road; 1-1 on artificial turf; 6-8 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Dave McGinnis' regular-season record: 8-17 in two seasons with Cardinals.

McGinnis' postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 29-51 (.363, ranks 27th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1998.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*306.1	10	18
Rushing offense	*90.6	12	27
Passing offense	*215.6	7	13
Scoring offense	295	8	20
Total defense	*355.3	13	28
Rushing defense	*130.4	13	24
Passing defense	*224.9	12	26
Scoring defense	343	10	22
Takeaways	24	13	T25
Giveaways	27	T5	T9
Turnover differential	-3	10	T18
Sacks	19	15	31
Sacks allowed	29	4	9

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dave McGinnis	Head coach	17	7
Rich Olson	Offensive coordinator	8	2
Larry Marmie	Defensive coordinator	7	7
Geep Chryst	Quarterbacks	12	2
Mike Devlin	Asst. off. line/off. QC	3	3
Jeff Fitzgerald	Linebackers	9	3
Joe Greene	Defensive line	16	7
Pete Hoener	Tight ends	3	2
Hank Kuhlmann	Special teams	26	5
Stan Kwan	Spec. teams asst./def. QC	11	2
Kevin Ramsey	Defensive backs	2	2
Bob Rogucki	Strength & conditioning	13	13
Johnny Roland	Running backs	25	6
Jerry Sullivan	Wide receivers	11	2
George Warhop	Offensive line	7	5



Although Clement improved late last season, he sometimes has trouble with speed rushers.

year player Marcus Bell, will battle Davis for the left tackle job. The hope is Vanden Bosch returns healthy, Wakefield develops and Bryant gives the team an inside rush. This group should be decent at stuffing the run, but if it doesn't start bringing the heat, this will be another long year for the defensive backs. **GRADE: C-**

Linebackers—This group must produce more, in running and passing situations. Veteran Rob Fredrickson returns at the right outside linebacker spot, and he's one of the team's most valuable players when he's healthy. He moves to middle linebacker in nickel situations and is athletic and smart enough to make plays. But he suffered nagging injuries in the latter half of the past two seasons. Last year, he hardly practiced during the final six weeks because of a knee condition.

Middle linebacker Ronald McKinnon enjoyed one of his better seasons last year. He lost 25 pounds, regained his mobility and again became a playmaker. He's an emotional, fiery leader. His lack of size sometimes hurts him in the running game, and he needs some big run stuffers up front

REALIGNMENT reality

With the move to the NFC West, owner Bill Bidwill will miss the rivalries with NFC East teams. No one else will miss the five-hour plane rides to and from the East Coast, however. The move won't help the Cardinals competitively because they are going from one of the weakest divisions to one of the strongest. A young defense will be severely tested against division foes St. Louis, San Francisco and Seattle. With a suspect pass rush, the Cardinals will struggle to slow down two of the game's best quarterbacks: the Rams' Kurt Warner and the 49ers' Jeff Garcia. A young secondary also will be tested. The offense, however, should fit in well in what promises to be a high-scoring division. It will be interesting to watch receiver David Boston match up twice against Rams cornerback Aeneas Williams, a former teammate and probably the best player the Cardinals have had since moving to Arizona.



Off-field problems threaten to overwhelm the progress Boston has made on the field.

Punt returner Arnold Jackson showed some nifty moves last season as a rookie. He's also gutsy; he was the only regular returner in the league not to call for a fair catch. He averaged 11.5 yards a return, and his longest was 55.

Jenkins slipped as a kickoff returner after a terrific 2000 season. He concentrated so much on improving as a receiver that it seemed to affect his special teams duties.

The team decided not to re-sign long snapper Trey Junkin. Instead, it will go with Nathan Hodel or backup tight end Bush.

GRADE: B

BOTTOM LINE Though the Cardinals upgraded their talent, they will find it difficult to improve on last season's 7-9 record. They're in a tougher division, the schedule is more difficult, and the pass rush remains suspect. But if the offense provides a return on the team's hefty investment, a wild-card berth is possible.

TSN

Kent Somers covers the Cardinals for The Arizona Republic.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● David Boston
	□ Arnold Jackson
LT	□ L.J. Shelton
	■ Leonard Davis
LG	● Pete Kendall
	□ Chris Dishman
C	■ Mike Gruttadauria
	□ Jason Starkey
RG	● Leonard Davis
	□ Chris Dishman
RT	■ Anthony Clement
	■ Leonard Davis
TE	■ Freddie Jones
	□ Steve Bush
WR	■ Frank Sanders
	□ MarTay Jenkins
QB	■ Jake Plummer
	□ Chris Greisen
RB	■ Thomas Jones
	□ Marcel Shipp
FB	■ Joel Makovicka
	□ Dennis McKinley

Defense

LE	□ Fred Wakefield
	□ Thomas Burke
DT	□ Russell Davis
	□ Marcus Bell
DT	■ Wendell Bryant
	□ Marcus Bell
RE	■ Kyle Vanden Bosch
	□ Thomas Burke
OLB	■ Raynoch Thompson
	□ LeVar Woods
MLB	● Ronald McKinnon
	□ Michael Young
OLB	● Rob Fredrickson
	□ LeVar Fisher
CB	● Duane Starks
	■ David Barrett
CB	■ David Barrett
	■ Renaldo Hill
SS	■ Adrian Wilson
	■ Pat Tillman
FS	● Kwamie Lassiter
	■ Adrian Wilson

Specialists

K	■ Bill Gramatica
P	■ Scott Player
KR	● MarTay Jenkins
PR	● Arnold Jackson
LS	□ Nathan Hodel
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

CARDINALS ROSTER

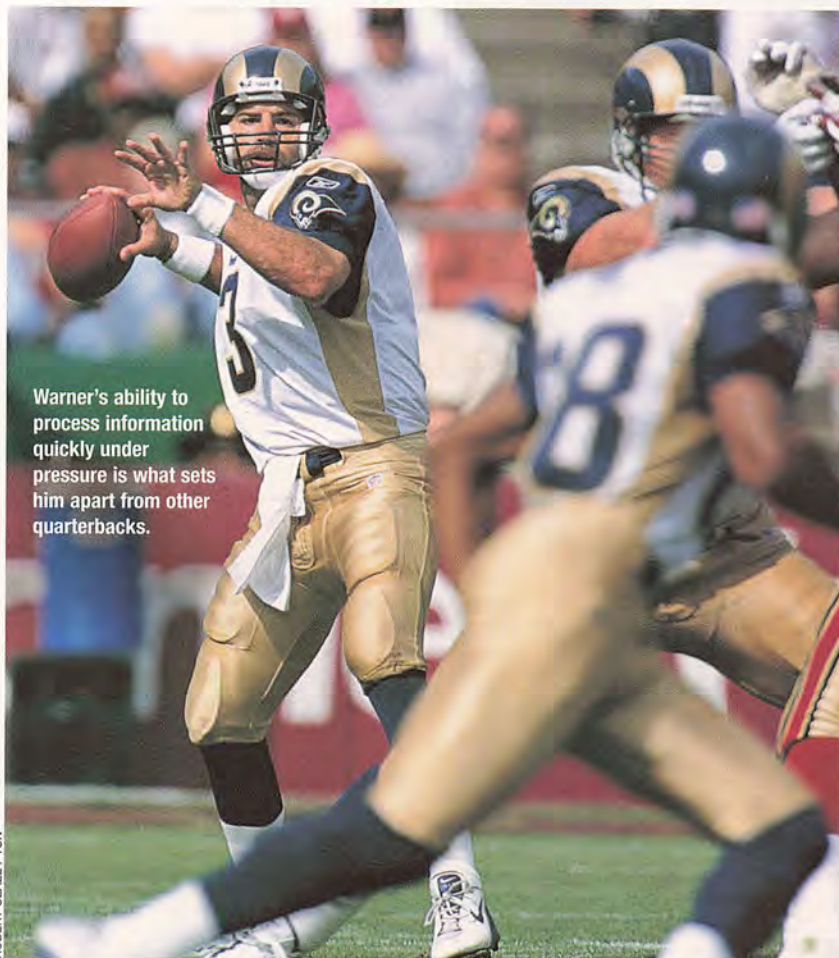
No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
14	Greisen, Chris	6-3/219	7-2-76	4	NW Missouri St.	D7/99	0/0
12	McCown, Josh	6-4/223	7-4-79	R	Sam Houston State	D3a/02	—
16	Plummer, Jake	6-2/202	12-19-74	6	Arizona State	D2/97	16/16
Running backs							
20	Anderson, Damien	5-10/212	7-17-79	R	Northwestern	FA/02	—
26	Jones, Thomas	5-10/211	8-19-78	3	Virginia	D1/00	16/2
34	Makovicka, Joel (FB)	5-11/196	10-6-75	4	Nebraska	D4/99	16/14
39	McKinley, Dennis (FB)	6-2/248	11-3-76	4	Mississippi State	D6c/99	14/0
33	Scobey, Josh	5-11/218	12-11-79	R	Kansas State	D6/02	—
31	Shipp, Marcel	5-11/219	8-8-78	2	Massachusetts	FA/01	11/0
Receivers							
80	Banks, Mike (TE)	6-4/260	11-5-79	R	Iowa State	D7/02	—
89	Boston, David	6-2/222	8-19-78	4	Ohio State	D1a/99	16/15
87	Bush, Steve (TE)	6-3/258	7-4-74	6	Arizona State	UFA/01	9/6
86	Gilmore, Bryan	6-0/194	7-21-78	2	Midwestern State	FA/00	2/0
84	Jackson, Arnold	5-8/163	4-9-77	2	Louisville	FA/01	16/2
82	Jenkins, MarTay	6-0/201	2-28-75	4	Nebraska-Omaha	W-Dal/99	13/3
85	Jones, Freddie (TE)	6-5/270	9-16-74	6	North Carolina	FA/02	14/9
11	McAddley, Jason	6-1/203	7-28-79	R	Alabama	D5/02	—
83	Mitchell, Tywan	6-5/250	12-10-75	3	Minnesota-Mankato	FA/99	16/4
81	Sanders, Frank	6-2/200	2-17-73	8	Auburn	D2/95	15/13
Offensive linemen							
61	Borum, Jarvis (T)	6-7/324	9-16-78	2	North Carolina State	FA/01	1/1
65	Clement, Anthony (T)	6-8/351	4-10-76	5	SW Louisiana	D2b/98	16/16
75	Davis, Leonard	6-6/370	9-5-78	2	Texas	D1/01	16/16
67	Dishman, Chris (G)	6-3/332	2-27-74	6	Nebraska	D4/97	16/5
60	Gruttadauria, Mike (C)	6-3/284	12-6-72	7	Central Florida	UFA/00	15/15
76	Kendall, Pete (G)	6-5/294	7-9-73	7	Boston College	UFA/00	11/11
70	Shelton, L.J. (T)	6-6/335	3-21-76	4	Eastern Michigan	D1b/99	16/16
50	Starkey, Jason (C)	6-4/282	7-17-77	3	Marshall	FA/00	12/1
Defensive linemen							
94	Bell, Marcus (T)	6-2/233	6-1-79	2	Memphis	D4b/01	13/0
71	Bowers, Andy (E)	6-5/283	2-22-76	2	Utah	FA/01	1/1
91	Bryant, Wendell (T)	6-4/308	9-12-80	R	Wisconsin	D1/02	—
95	Burke, Thomas (E)	6-3/271	10-12-76	4	Wisconsin	D3/99	12/9
98	Davis, Russell (T)	6-4/306	3-28-75	4	North Carolina	W-Chi/00	16/16
72	Dwyer, Nate (T)	6-3/313	9-30-78	R	Kansas	D4/02	—
79	Fatafehi, Mario (T)	6-2/296	1-27-79	2	Kansas State	D5/01	7/1
96	Johnson, Dennis (E)	6-5/258	12-4-79	R	Kentucky	D3b/02	—
92	Tanner, Barron (T)	6-3/347	9-14-73	5	Oklahoma	FA/00	16/16
78	Tosi, Mao (E)	6-6/341	12-12-76	3	Idaho	D5a/00	11/1
93	Vanden Bosch, Kyle (E)	6-4/270	11-17-78	2	Nebraska	D2/01	3/3
97	Wakefield, Fred (E)	6-7/289	9-17-78	2	Illinois	FA/01	16/12
Linebackers							
52	Fisher, Levar	6-1/228	11-29-79	R	North Carolina State	D2/02	—
59	Fredrickson, Rob	6-4/243	5-13-71	9	Michigan State	UFA/99	15/15
57	McKinnon, Ronald	6-0/248	9-20-73	7	North Alabama	FA/96	16/16
58	Rutledge, Johnny	6-3/241	1-4-77	4	Florida	D2/99	14/0
54	Sanyika, Sekou	6-3/246	3-17-78	3	California	D7/00	16/1
55	Thompson, Raynoch	6-3/217	11-21-77	3	Tennessee	D2/00	14/14
56	Woods, LeVar	6-2/241	3-15-78	2	Iowa	FA/01	15/0
53	Young, Michael	6-1/223	6-1-78	1	Illinois	FA/02	0/0
Defensive backs							
36	Barrett, David (CB)	5-10/195	12-22-77	3	Arkansas	D4/00	16/9
21	Hill, Renaldo	5-11/182	11-12-78	2	Michigan State	D7a/01	14/1
42	Lassiter, Kwamie (S)	6-0/203	12-3-69	8	Kansas	FA/95	16/16
41	Lucas, Justin	5-10/197	7-15-76	4	Abilene Christian	FA/99	13/4
23	Rhinehart, Coby (CB)	5-11/191	2-7-77	4	Southern Methodist	D6a/99	13/0
22	Starks, Duane (CB)	5-10/170	5-23-74	5	Miami (Fla.)	UFA/02	15/15
44	Stone, Michael (CB)	5-11/189	2-13-78	2	Memphis	D2b/01	7/0
40	Tillman, Pat (S)	5-11/202	11-6-76	5	Arizona State	D7b/98	12/12
24	Wilson, Adrian	6-3/207	10-12-79	2	North Carolina State	D3/01	16/0
Specialists							
7	Gramatica, Bill (K)	5-10/194	7-10-78	2	South Florida	D4a/01	13/0
10	Player, Scott (P)	6-1/220	12-17-69	5	Florida State	FA/98	12/0

Other free agents invited to camp: P Tim Duncan, C Nathan Hodel.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Rams



Warner's ability to process information quickly under pressure is what sets him apart from other quarterbacks.

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

BY JIM THOMAS

The beauty of football is the best team doesn't always win. There are no best-of-seven series in the playoffs. You either do it that Sunday, or you don't. The heavily favored Rams fell into the "don't" category against New England in the Super Bowl. It was a stinging defeat for coach Mike Martz and the so-called "Greatest Show on Earth."

But Martz didn't sulk for long. He didn't have time. Martz, the front office and his coaching staff moved almost immediately into free agency and draft preparation after the 20-17 loss to the Patriots. The team is fighting the inevitable in this era: the erosion of a carefully constructed roster through losses in free agency and salary-cap casualties.

The Rams were able to re-sign defensive end Leonard Little and wide receiver Ricky Proehl, and match an offer sheet to restricted free-agent fullback James Hodgins. But they couldn't compete with lavish free-agent

offers to linebacker London Fletcher, wide receiver Az-Zahir Hakim and even tight end/long snapper Jeff Robinson.

Still, the offense remains the NFL's best. And the defense again figures to be in the upper echelon. In short, the Rams remain the team to beat. Since the modern era of free agency began in 1993, no team has reached the Super Bowl three times. The Rams have an excellent chance to be the first. No one is more motivated to get there than Martz, especially since San Diego—site of Super Bowl 37—is his hometown.

COACHING Strategies—Martz coaches football like a racecar driver. He has two speeds: fast and faster. Pass, pass, pass. Attack, attack, attack. But occasionally the racecar veers out of control, and the result is a turnover-plagued defeat like Super Bowl 36. If Martz would only tap the brakes once in a while, he would be the best coach in the NFL.

But he's still one of the best and showed improvement in his second year. Martz plays

to win in a league where most coaches play not to lose. He's not afraid to take chances, and he plays the game the way it should be played—full throttle.

Martz has stayed creative, keeping him one step ahead of defenses. The offense tries to use every inch of the field. Martz is big on personnel groupings, shifts, motion and varying formations to create advantages for his receivers.

Defensive coordinator Lovie Smith uses a more conservative approach in his cover 2 scheme. The base defense is a deep zone, designed to prevent the big play and keep the action in front of the back seven. But like the Martz offense, speed and aggressiveness are important. Smith's defense blitzes more than you would think and plays more man coverage than anticipated.

2002 Schedule

2002 Schedule						All times Eastern	
Sept. 8	at Denver	4:15	Nov. 10	SAN DIEGO	1:00		
Sept. 15	N.Y. GIANTS	4:05	Nov. 18	CHI. (Mon.)	9:00		
Sept. 23	at T.B. (Mon.)	9:00	Nov. 24	at Washington	4:15		
Sept. 29	DALLAS	1:00	Dec. 1	at Philadelphia	4:15		
Oct. 6	at San Fran.	4:15	Dec. 8	at Kansas City	1:00		
Oct. 13	OAKLAND	4:15	Dec. 15	ARIZONA	8:30		
Oct. 20	SEATTLE	1:00	Dec. 22	at Seattle	4:05		
Oct. 27	Open date		Dec. 30	S.F. (Mon.)	9:00		
Nov. 3	at Arizona	4:15	Strength of schedule: T 4th				

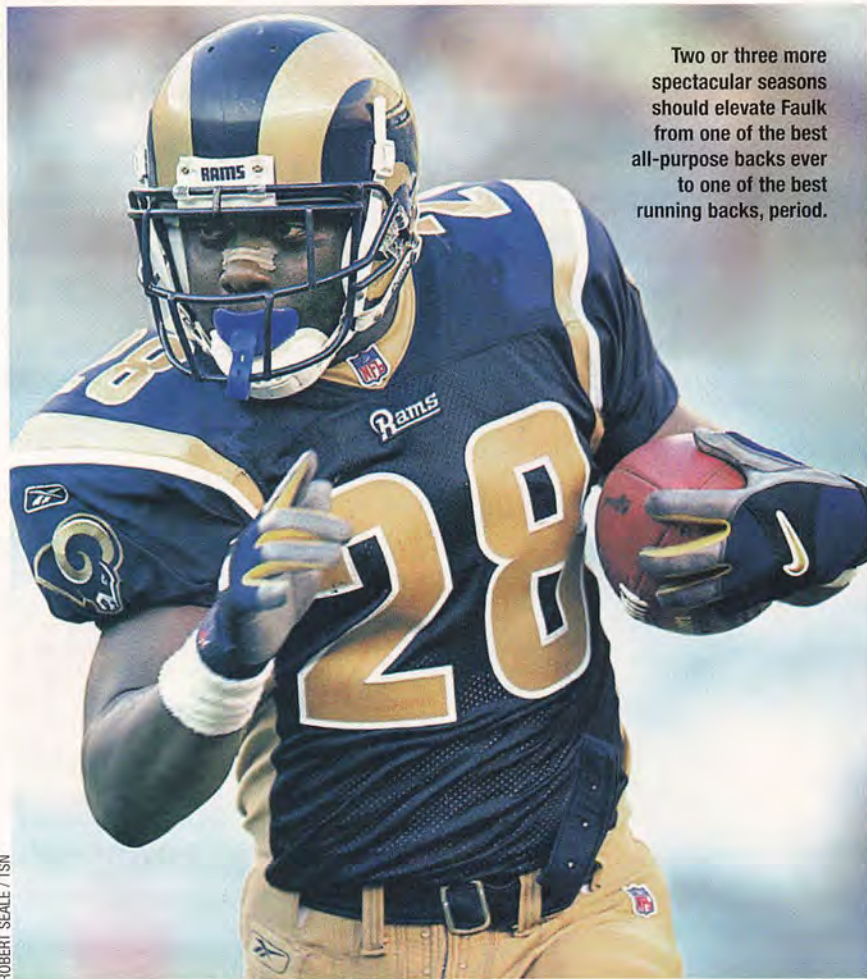
Style—When he took over for Dick Vermeil after the 2000 season, a general criticism of Martz was he was too laid back. Now we all know better. Martz is as intense as they come. He has no patience for players who lack passion. If you get on his wrong side, you probably won't be around long.

Martz believes character players are important to team chemistry. If you've earned his respect, there's a personal side to Martz that endears him to his players. Last August, he went to Florida to attend the funeral of Isaac Bruce's brother. He had a newspaper article commemorating Proehl's 500th career catch laminated and framed for him. Gestures like those mean a lot to players.

Martz works his players hard—practices are intense and often at game tempo. But he knows when to pull back and gives them more time off than most coaches give their players. During a training camp heat wave last year, Martz ended two-a-days, saying one practice was enough. That was one day before the heat-related death of Minnesota's Korey Stringer.

There are some vocal coaches on Martz's staff, most notably defensive line coach Bill Kollar. But, overall, Martz wants effective teachers, and he has them—from offensive line coach Jim Hanifan to special teams coach Bobby April to defensive coordinator Smith. **GRADE: A-**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Last season, Kurt Warner won his second MVP award in three seasons, despite a nagging thumb injury that affected his ability to throw the deep ball in some games. The injury became something of a chronic



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

Two or three more spectacular seasons should elevate Faulk from one of the best all-purpose backs ever to one of the best running backs, period.

problem and bears watching. Warner wore a sleeve on the thumb during much of the off-season, giving it more of a chance to heal. He'll be handled carefully in camp and in the preseason.

Even with the thumb condition, Warner put up staggering numbers in 2001. He should do the same in '02, considering 10 offensive starters return. Warner's ability to

process information quickly under pressure is what sets him apart from most quarterbacks. It's one of the main reasons the offense has become so complex, allowing Martz to stay ahead of opposing defenses.

Warner is determined to improve his interception total. He has thrown 40 in 27 regular-season games the past two seasons. Some of last season's were caused by the

thumb, but Warner also has gotten into a habit of forcing the ball. He needs to take the safe dump-off pass once in a while instead of trying to thread the needle downfield, especially because more defenses are playing deep zones against him.

Backup Jamie Martin has a year of seasoning and a vote of confidence from Martz and team management in the form of a contract extension. Martin's a heady, accurate passer, but he got very little work last season, even though Martz could have used him more in several mop-up situations. Marc Bulger figures to be the third quarterback. **GRADE: A**

Running backs—At the end of the 2001 season, Marshall Faulk said his right knee felt as good as it had in a long while. If the knee holds up, Faulk should be headed for his fifth straight season of 2,000 total yards, a feat unprecedented in NFL history. Faulk already is assured of a Hall of Fame berth. Two or three more seasons of high production will elevate him from one of the very best all-purpose backs in league history to one of the best backs period.

Much of the offense revolves around Faulk, as a receiver and a runner. Martz likes to pass the ball all over the place in the first half and establish a comfortable lead, then give Faulk a steady diet of handoffs in the second half. Faulk is one of the most effective backs in the league in the red zone, and he more than holds his own running between the tackles.

As a receiver, the Rams line up Faulk in the slot, put him in motion and even split him out wide. The idea is to isolate him on safeties and linebackers—matchups Faulk almost always wins. The Patriots had a lot of success mugging Faulk coming out of the backfield in the Super Bowl, but in most games those tactics are called penalties.

How Martz plans to use Trung Canidate is unclear. Ideally, Canidate would get 8 to 10 touches a game, spelling Faulk and serving as a change-of-pace back. Canidate isn't as elusive as Faulk in the open field and lacks Faulk's uncanny vision, but he's faster. If Canidate wants to have any meaningful role, however, he'll have to do a better job of hanging onto the ball. If he can't, rookie Lamar Gordon could emerge as the primary backup.

The re-signing of Hodgins gives the team a powerful lead-blocking fullback. Hodgins could catch a few more passes this year—he had four receptions last season—but his role is pretty much limited to blocking. **GRADE: A**

Receivers—For the first time since 1999, there's a change in what generally has been regarded as the best receiving unit in the NFL. Hakim signed with Detroit and has been replaced by Terrence Wilkins, acquired in a trade with Indianapolis. Like Hakim, Wilkins is small and his game is based on speed and acceleration. Whether he has Hakim's playmaking ability, both as a receiver and on various trick plays, is unclear.

2002 draft picks

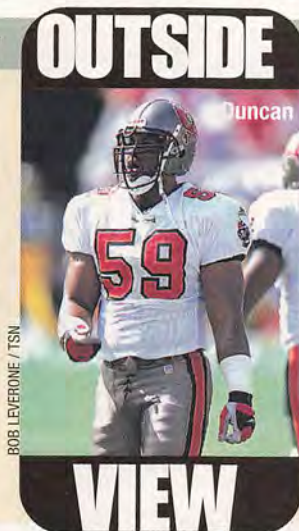
Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-31	Robert Thomas	LB	UCLA	Rams think his speed makes up for lack of ideal size.
2-64	Travis Fisher	DB	Central Florida	Has good closing speed and will support against run but lacks size.
3-84	Lamar Gordon	RB	North Dakota State	Rams needed to add RB depth with Faulk entering option year.
3-95	Eric Crouch	WR	Nebraska	Martz says Crouch can become a pretty good NFL receiver.
4-130	Travis Scott	G	Arizona State	Rams like his size and toughness, but he didn't play much at ASU.
5-167	Courtland Bullard	LB	Ohio State	Undersized but can run, making him a good fit in Rams' defense.
6-205	Steve Bellisari	DB	Ohio State	Switching from QB to S, but track record for such a move isn't good.
7-243	Chris Massey	C	Marshall	Rams need a long snapper; if he doesn't mess up, he'll make team.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-1	Orlando Pace	OT	Ohio State	Starter with Rams
'98-6	Grant Wistrom	DE	Nebraska	Starter with Rams
'99-6	Torry Holt	WR	N.C. State	Starter with Rams
'00-31	Trung Canidate	RB	Arizona	Backup with Rams
'01-12	Damione Lewis	DT	Miami (Fla.)	Backup with Rams
'01-20	Adam Archuleta	S	Arizona State	Starter with Rams
'01-29	Ryan Pickett	DT	Ohio State	Backup with Rams

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

As we've watched **Marshall Faulk** over the years, we've always rated him as the No. 1 player in the NFL. Sometimes, you say a guy is a jack-of-all-trades, but he doesn't master any. Here's a guy who masters all of them. He has great vision as a runner and excellent hands as a receiver. He anticipates things before they happen, and he accelerates out of his cuts like nobody else. ... You've got to have a tremendous amount of respect for **Kurt Warner's** toughness. He just kind of stands in there, waits for his guys to come open and does a nice job of hitting them. The chemistry that he has with his receivers is as good as what Montana had with Rice and Taylor when they were in their heyday. ... I think their No. 1 pick, **Robert Thomas**, could end



THE RAMS

up playing for them on the weak side. Then you have **Jamie Duncan** in the middle and **Tommy Polley** on the strong side, and you've got what **Lovie Smith** had in Tampa—speed players as linebackers. ... I was really enamored with **London Fletcher**. For a guy his size, he was a physical presence. But I think they feel Duncan will fit well within that defensive scheme. He understands it a little bit more, which made Fletcher expendable. ... **Terrence Wilkins** is more than a capable replacement for **Az-Zahir Hakim**. They haven't lost anything there. Wilkins does some unbelievable things with the ball in his hands. They can hit him on the quick screen. He'll be good as a slot receiver. He's a tremendous return guy. And he'll do a much better job of hanging on to the ball than Hakim.

The constants of this group are Bruce and Torry Holt, as well as the veteran Proehl. Bruce has finished with more than 1,000 receiving yards the last three years, and Holt has gone over 1,300 yards the past two seasons. Holt has emerged as the team's top deep threat, but Bruce remains perhaps the best clutch receiver in the league. His toughness is underrated, too; he played Super Bowl 36 with a couple of broken ribs, an injury sustained in the game's first series.

Proehl adds steady hands to the mix. Last season, at 33, Proehl played as well as he has in four seasons in St. Louis. He's money on third down and has made a couple of the biggest postseason catches in franchise history.

The addition of rookie Eric Crouch, the Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback from Nebraska, adds another dimension. Crouch doesn't need to be productive this season, but Martz will try to get him ready as soon as possible. Once Crouch has the base offense down as a receiver, Martz could have him throwing, running and catching all over the field.

The tight end position is solid with Ernie Conwell coming off his best season and second-year man Brandon Manumaleuna ready for a larger role. **GRADE: A-**

Line—The Rams have benefited from continuity along the line. Left tackle Orlando Pace, left guard Tom Nutten and right guard Adam Timmerman enter their fourth season starting together. Add center Andy McCollum, and four-fifths of the line begins its third season together. These guys trust each other and know they can depend on each other.

The Rams have one of the most complex pass-protection schemes. Their blockers are asked to do more—and think more. The "Air Marts" passing game puts more pressure on the line because of its frequent use of four and five receivers. This is one reason Warner, even with his quick decision-making, takes more hits than most quarterbacks.

With his combination of size and athleticism, Pace does an excellent job protecting Warner's blind side. Nutten is an underrated pass blocker. The run-blocking skills of Pace and Nutten frequently get overlooked, but Faulk gets a lot of his yards running to the left side. At center, the resourceful McCollum played near a Pro Bowl level a year ago. At right guard, Timmerman enjoyed a career year, going to his second Pro Bowl. He's very good in space, pulling on sweeps and traps.

The continuity hasn't carried over to right tackle, where John St. Clair becomes the third starter in four seasons. St. Clair didn't

play a snap in his first two seasons, but the coaches think he is ready to replace Ryan Tucker, who signed with the Browns. St. Clair has the size and wingspan to be an effective pass blocker. Two years of watching, learning and practicing have helped him make the transition from college center.

GRADE: B+

DEFENSE Line—Many defensive line coaches talk about rotating players during games. Kollar lives by those words. There isn't a team in the NFL that rotates its defensive linemen as much, to the point that some of the substitution patterns have been mind-boggling to opposing scouts.

At tackle, second-year players Damione Lewis and Ryan Pickett might play as much as starters Brian Young and Jeff Zgonina.

At end, Grant Wistrom and Leonard Little will play the majority of snaps. But Little won't play on some running downs. Lewis may spell Little at left end while still getting reps at tackle, if a pre-season experiment works out. Former Falcon John Burroughs also could provide a run-stuffing presence at left end.

Reserve Tyoka Jackson is an effective swingman at end or tackle. He always seems to make a play or two when he gets in the game.

Kollar's rotation system keeps his players fresh—and can wear down opposing linemen. It also complicates opponents' game-planning because they can't concentrate on

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. After a poor season, the special teams will be much better. An experienced return man (Terrence Wilkins) and punter (Mitch Berger) will help.
2. One or both of the team's young DTs, Damione Lewis and Ryan Pickett, will break into the starting lineup before the season ends. An off-season of weights and another year of coaching from Bill Kollar help them develop.
3. Tommy Polley will win the weakside LB job over rookie Robert Thomas in camp. But by season's end, Thomas will have that job and Polley will switch to the strong side.
4. There will be early growing pains, but John St. Clair will develop into a solid right tackle, solving one of the few question marks in the lineup.
5. Kurt Warner and Marshall Faulk will stay healthy enough for the Rams to score 500-plus points for an unprecedented fourth straight season.



St. Clair

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Phil. (OT)	W	20-17
Sept. 23	at San Francisco	W	30-26
Sept. 30	MIAMI	W	42-10
Oct. 8	at Detroit	W	35-0
Oct. 14	N.Y. GIANTS	W	15-14
Oct. 21	at N.Y. Jets	W	34-14
Oct. 28	NEW ORLEANS	L	31-34
Nov. 4	Open date		
Nov. 11	CAROLINA	W	48-14
Nov. 18	at New England	W	24-17
Nov. 26	TAMPA BAY	L	17-24
Dec. 2	at Atlanta	W	35-6
Dec. 9	SAN FRANCISCO	W	27-14
Dec. 17	at New Orleans	W	34-21
Dec. 23	at Carolina	W	38-32
Dec. 30	INDIANAPOLIS	W	42-17
Jan. 6	ATLANTA	W	31-13
Jan. 20	GREEN BAY*	W	45-17
Jan. 27	PHILADELPHIA*	W	29-24
Feb. 3	New England†	L	17-20

*NFC playoff game.

†Super Bowl 36 at New Orleans.

Moves

Key additions

P Mitch Berger	Free agent/Vikings
LB Jamie Duncan	Free agent/Buccaneers
FB Chris Hetherington	Free agent/Panthers
WR Terrence Wilkins	Trade/Colts

Key losses

DE Chidi Ahanotu	Free agent
LB Brian Allen	Expansion draft/Texans
P John Baker	Free agent/Texans
LB Mark Fields	Free agent/Panthers
LB London Fletcher	Free agent/Bills
WR Az-Zahir Hakim	Free agent/Lions
OT Rod Jones	Free agent/Redskins
DL Sean Moran	Free agent/49ers
TE/LS Jeff Robinson	Free agent/Cowboys
CB Jacoby Shepherd	Free agent/Texans
OT Ryan Tucker	Free agent/Browns

Stadium/Media

Edward Jones Dome (66,000, artificial).

Ticket information: 314-425-8830.

Training site: Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill.; 309-298-4400.

Radio: KLOU-FM (103.3); KATZ-AM (1600).

Website: www.stlouisrams.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 14-2 (1st in NFC West); 7-1 in division; 10-2 in conference; 4-0 vs. AFC; 6-2 at home; 8-0 on road; 10-2 on artificial turf; 4-0 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Defeated Green Bay, 45-17, in NFC semifinal game; defeated Philadelphia, 29-24, in NFC championship game; lost to New England, 20-17, in Super Bowl 36.

Mike Martz's regular-season record: 24-8 in two seasons with Rams.

Martz's postseason record: 2-2 in two appearances with Rams (0-1 in Super Bowl).

Team record last five years: 46-34 (.575, ranks T10th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 1998.

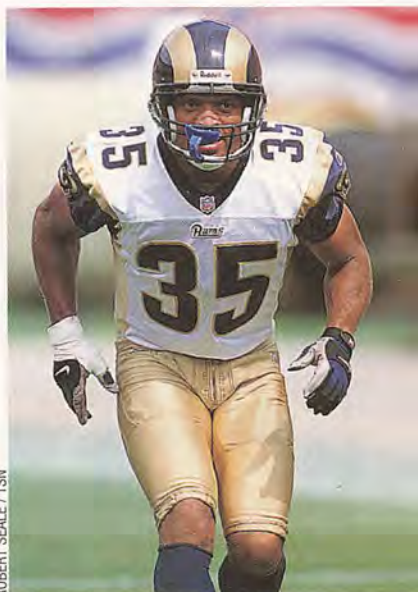
Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*418.1	1	1
Rushing offense	*126.7	3	5
Passing offense	*291.4	1	1
Scoring offense	503	1	1
Total defense	*279.4	1	3
Rushing defense	*85.9	2	3
Passing defense	*193.6	5	11
Scoring defense	273	4	7
Takeaways	34	T5	T9
Giveaways	44	15	31
Turnover differential	-10	13	T26
Sacks	45	T5	T7
Sacks allowed	40	T9	T17

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coch	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Mike Martz	Head coach	11	4
John Matsko	Asst. head coach/off. line	11	4
Bobby Jackson	Assoc. HC/off. coord./RBs	20	3
Lovie Smith	Defensive coordinator	7	2
Bobby April	Special teams	11	2
Chris Clausen	Strength and conditioning	14	11
Henry Ellard	Wide receivers	2	2
Mike Haluchak	Linebackers	17	3
Jim Hanifan	Offensive line	29	6
Bill Kollar	Defensive line	14	13
Dana LeDuc	Strength and conditioning	8	4
Carlos Mainord	Secondary	10	1
Wilbert Montgomery	Tight ends	6	6
John Ramsdell	Quarterbacks	8	8
Matt Sheldon	Defensive assistant	2	2
Ken Zampese	Passing game	5	3



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

Acquiring Williams did almost as much for the defense as the Faulk trade did for the offense.

one player at each position.

Little is the focal point of the pass rush. Counting the postseason, Little registered 17½ sacks in 16 games last season. Look for offenses to use more double teams or chip-blocking on Little. That's one reason other pass-rush threats must be developed. Wistrom has averaged almost nine sacks in his three seasons as a starter at right end, but he gets by on sheer hustle more than classic pass-rushing skills.

Lewis and Pickett should provide more of an inside push this season. Both have a quick first step that is vital for Smith's one-gap scheme. Zgonina is the run-stuffing specialist of the group. He has surprising strength and leverage for his size. Young emerged as a surprising playmaker in 2001, registering 6½ sacks in his second season. He was a key factor in the defense's success.

GRADE: B

Linebackers—No unit on the team has undergone as much change. Gone are Fletcher at middle linebacker and Mark Fields at outside linebacker. Both began 2001 as starters. Free-agent pickup Jamie Duncan doesn't figure to be as strong against the run as Fletcher, but he should be better in coverage. Duncan spent three of his four seasons playing for Smith in Tampa Bay and is very familiar with the cover 2 scheme.

As a rookie, Tommy Polley eventually replaced Fields, and he could be a budding star. However, Polley had some coverage problems in the Super Bowl and could be moved from the weak to the strong side if first-round pick Robert Thomas comes along quickly. The weakside 'backer is the playmaking position in this defense and normally stays on the field in the nickel package.

The strongside linebacker usually comes

out in both nickel and dime situations. Thomas is even faster than Polley and has the range and aggressiveness that make him a perfect fit in this defense. But Thomas played middle linebacker at UCLA and doesn't have much experience in coverage—an important job requirement in this scheme.

Ideally, the Rams would use Don Davis, who started on the strong side for most of last season, as a backup at all three positions. Davis is solid, but Thomas and Polley potentially could be a dynamic tandem on the outside. **GRADE: B-**

Secondary—The acquisition of cornerback Aeneas Williams last year did almost as much for the defense as the trade for Faulk did for the offense in 1999. Touchdown passes allowed dropped from 32 in 2000 to 16 in '01. Williams has the size and aggressiveness to muscle bigger receivers and be an effective run defender. He is used like a safety in some situations, something that could extend his career.

Dexter McCleon was much-maligned after giving up touchdown passes in the NFC championship game and the Super Bowl. But he is an above-average corner. Nonetheless, this could be a make-or-break year for McCleon because his base salary will almost double in 2003 (from \$2.1 million to \$3.9 million) and the team is strapped for cash.

Nickel back Dre' Bly could challenge for McCleon's job. Although he played with more discipline last season, Bly still goes for the big play and the big hit too often when a simple tackle or breakup would do. His missed tackle on Troy Brown in the Super Bowl helped the Patriots get in range for the game-winning field goal.

Cornerback Jerametrius Butler was a pleasant surprise a year ago as a rookie. Although he had a tendency to get nicked up, he displayed moxie beyond his years and good closing speed. Any contribution at corner from speedy second-round pick Travis Fisher would be welcomed.

At safety, Kim Herring was so-so a year ago but should be better now that he knows the system. Strong safety Adam Archuleta will continue to be a force, particularly against the run and in blitz situations unless this human missile encounters more concussion problems. **GRADE: B**

SPECIAL TEAMS A lot of effort was spent in the offseason trying to rectify this unit, the team's weak link last year. Wilkins gives the team its first legitimate kickoff returner since Tony Horne. Wilkins also may return punts, though Bly is another possibility. Wilkins' track record shows he will be much more secure with the football than Hakim was.

The punting game should be elevated with the arrival of veteran Mitch Berger, considered one of the best in the game until slowed by back and neck injuries last season.

REALIGNMENT reality

On paper, the new NFC West is the toughest division in football. Its teams went a combined 42-22 last season (a winning percentage of 65.6, easily the best among the eight divisions). The NFC West and the AFC South are the only divisions with two new members, and the Rams must familiarize themselves with Arizona and Seattle. They have played the Seahawks only twice since moving to St. Louis in 1995 and haven't played the Cardinals since 1998. But old West Coast rival San Francisco remains the biggest threat to the Rams' attempt to win their third division title in the last four years. The Rams have won the last six meetings between the clubs, but the 49ers are closing the gap and are coming off a very good offseason. In adding trips to Seattle and Arizona every year, no team has had its travel increase as much through realignment as the Rams.



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

Bruce is recognized as one of the NFL's clutch receivers, but his toughness may be underrated.

Even with those problems, he still finished seventh in the NFL with a 43.5 average. Berger should provide a couple of more yards per kick and be better in the clutch than predecessor John Baker. Jeff Wilkins, one of the league's best kickers, made 23-of-29 field-goal attempts last season and is strong on kickoffs.

The coverage units were lacking last season, but the speed of draft picks Fisher, Crouch, Courtland Bullard and Steve Bellisari should help, assuming they make the final roster. **GRADE: B**

BOTTOM LINE The Rams return the core from the 2001 team. As long as Warner and Faulk, who have combined to win the last three league MVP awards, stay healthy, they remain the team to beat in the NFC. Even though the Rams face a tougher schedule, a 12-4 finish and a first-round playoff bye are reasonable goals. **TSN**

Jim Thomas covers the Rams for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Isaac Bruce
	■ Ricky Proehl
LT	● Orlando Pace
	■ John St. Clair
LG	■ Tom Nutter
	□ Kaulana Noa
C	■ Andy McCollum
	■ Frank Garcia
RG	● Adam Timmerman
	□ Travis Scott
RT	■ John St. Clair
	□ Cameron Spikes
TE	■ Ernie Conwell
	■ B. Manumaleuna
WR	● Torry Holt
	■ Terrence Wilkins
QB	● Kurt Warner
	■ Jamie Martin
RB	● Marshall Faulk
	■ Trung Canidate
FB	■ James Hodgins
	■ Chris Hetherington

Defense

LE	● Leonard Little
	■ John Burroughs
DT	■ Brian Young
	■ Damione Lewis
DT	■ Jeff Zgonina
	■ Ryan Pickett
RE	● Grant Wistrom
	■ Tyoka Jackson
OLB	■ Robert Thomas
	■ Don Davis
MLB	■ Jamie Duncan
	■ Don Davis
OLB	● Tommy Polley
	■ Don Davis
CB	■ Dexter McCleon
	■ Dre' Bly
CB	● Aeneas Williams
	■ Jerametrius Butler
SS	■ Adam Archuleta
	□ Rich Coady
FS	■ Kim Herring
	□ Nick Sorensen

Specialists

K	● Jeff Wilkins
P	■ Mitch Berger
KR	■ Terrence Wilkins
PR	■ Terrence Wilkins
LS	□ Chris Massey
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

RAMS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
10	Bulger, Marc	6-3/215	4-5-77	2	West Virginia	FA/01	0/0
12	Martin, Jamie	6-2/205	2-8-70	8	Weber State	FA/01	5/0
13	Warner, Kurt	6-2/220	6-22-71	5	Northern Iowa	FA/98	16/16
Running backs							
24	Canidate, Trung	5-11/205	3-3-77	3	Arizona	D1/00	16/2
28	Faulk, Marshall	5-10/211	2-26-73	9	San Diego State	T-Ind./99	14/14
34	Gordon, Lamar	6-1/204	1-7-80	R	North Dakota State	D3a/02	—
	Hetherington, Chris (FB)	6-3/250	11-27-72	7	Yale	UFA/02	16/1
42	Hodgins, James (FB)	6-1/270	4-30-77	4	San Jose State	FA/99	16/9
Receivers							
80	Bruce, Isaac	6-0/188	11-10-72	9	Memphis State	D2/94	16/16
84	Conwell, Ernie (TE)	6-2/265	8-17-72	7	Washington	D2b/96	16/13
89	Crouch, Eric	6-0/205	11-16-78	R	Nebraska	D3b/02	—
81	Holt, Torry	6-0/190	6-5-76	4	North Carolina State	D1/99	16/15
86	Manumaleuna, B. (TE)	6-2/288	1-4-80	2	Arizona	D4b/01	16/0
83	Murphy, Yo	5-10/187	5-11-71	3	Idaho	FA/01	16/0
87	Proehl, Ricky	6-0/190	3-7-68	13	Wake Forest	UFA/98	16/3
82	Wilkins, Terrence	5-10/180	7-29-75	4	Virginia	T-Ind/02	11/4
Offensive linemen							
65	Garcia, Frank (C)	6-2/302	1-28-72	8	Washington	FA/01	13/3
45	Massey, Chris (C)	6-0/245	8-21-79	R	Marshall	D7/02	—
67	McCollum, Andy (C)	6-4/300	6-2-70	9	Toledo	UFA/99	16/16
71	Noa, Kaulana	6-3/307	12-29-76	3	Hawaii	D4/00	0/0
61	Nutter, Tom (G)	6-5/304	6-8-71	6	Western Michigan	FA/98	15/13
76	Pace, Orlando (T)	6-7/325	11-4-75	6	Ohio State	D1/97	16/16
70	St. Clair, John (T)	6-4/320	7-15-77	3	Virginia	D3/00	0/0
64	Scott, Travis (G)	6-6/300	8-9-79	R	Arizona State	D4/02	—
73	Spikes, Cameron (G)	6-2/323	11-6-76	4	Texas A&M	D5/99	5/0
62	Timmerman, Adam (G)	6-4/310	8-14-71	8	South Dakota State	UFA/99	16/16
Defensive linemen							
93	Brown, Jonathon (E)	6-3/270	11-28-75	2	Tennessee	FA/00	3/0
95	Burroughs, John (E)	6-4/276	5-17-72	7	Wyoming	FA/02	0/0
97	Jackson, Tyoka (T)	6-2/280	11-22-71	8	Penn State	FA/01	16/0
92	Lewis, Damione (T)	6-2/301	3-1-78	2	Miami	D1a/01	9/3
57	Little, Leonard (E)	6-3/257	10-19-74	5	Tennessee	D3/98	13/0
79	Pickett, Ryan (T)	6-2/310	10-8-79	2	Ohio State	D1c/01	11/0
98	Wistrom, Grant (E)	6-4/272	7-3-76	5	Nebraska	D1/98	15/15
66	Young, Brian (E)	6-2/290	7-8-77	3	Texas-El Paso	D5/00	16/16
90	Zgonina, Jeff (T)	6-2/305	5-24-70	10	Purdue	UFA/99	13/13
Linebackers							
51	Bullard, Courtland	6-3/234	8-2-78	R	Ohio State	D5/02	—
56	Cohen, Dustin	6-3/241	12-22-76	2	Ohio	FA/01	4/0
58	Davis, Don	6-1/234	12-17-72	7	Kansas	UFA/01	12/8
59	Duncan, Jamie	6-1/238	7-20-75	5	Vanderbilt	UFA/02	15/15
54	Hawkes, Michael	6-0/242	4-11-77	1	Virginia Tech	FA/00	2/0
52	Polley, Tommy	6-3/240	1-11-78	2	Florida State	D2a/01	16/11
55	Thomas, Robert	6-0/229	7-17-80	R	UCLA	D1/02	—
Defensive backs							
31	Archuleta, Adam (S)	5-11/209	11-27-77	2	Arizona State	D1b/01	13/12
37	Bellisari, Steve (S)	6-3/220	4-21-80	R	Ohio State	D6/02	—
32	Bly, Dre' (CB)	5-9/190	5-22-77	4	North Carolina	D2/99	16/4
23	Butler, Jerametrius (CB)	5-10/181	11-28-78	2	Kansas State	D5/01	16/0
38	Coady, Rich (S)	6-0/203	1-26-76	4	Texas A&M	D3/99	12/2
22	Fisher, Travis (CB)	5-10/189	9-12-79	R	Central Florida	D2/02	—
30	Gary, Willie (S)	5-10/195	11-1-78	2	Kentucky	FA/01	7/0
20	Herring, Kim (S)	6-0/200	9-10-75	6	Penn State	UFA/01	16/15
21	McCleon, Dexter (CB)	5-10/195	10-9-73	6	Clemson	D2/97	16/16
41	Sorensen, Nick (S)	6-2/205	7-31-78	2	Virginia Tech	FA/01	7/0
35	Williams, Aeneas (CB)	5-11/200	1-29-68	12	Southern	T-Ari/01	16/16
Specialists							
17	Berger, Mitch (P)	6-4/228	6-24-72	8	Colorado	FA/02	12/0
14	Wilkins, Jeff (K)	6-2/205	4-19-72	9	Youngstown State	FA/97	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: WR Eugene Baker, TE Giles Cole, TE Jason Gavadz, WR Darran Hall, WR Francis St. Paul, WR Chris Taylor.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



49ers

Despite his penchant for leaving the pocket, Garcia has been a durable performer.



By Mike Triplett

A few years ago, 49ers fans were warned to bear down while the team wallowed in salary-cap purgatory. Now they might have to be warned to keep their expectations in check.

Few thought the team would come through the cap crisis this quickly and this strongly. Now, after a 12-4 breakthrough season, the 49ers suddenly are in position to return to elite status. They did nothing this offseason to indicate the rapid reconstruction process won't continue.

While several of the NFL's upper-tier teams were losing handfuls of top free agents this offseason, if not completely stripping their rosters, the 49ers held firm—and then some. Safety Lance Schulters was the only starter lost in the free-agent market, but the team replaced him with the equally capable Tony Parrish. And the 49ers had enough room under the cap to make an upgrade at left guard, replacing 39-year-old Pro Bowl player Ray Brown with Pro Bowler Ron Stone, who turns 31 in July.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 5	at NYG (Thur.)	8:30	Nov. 10	KANSAS CITY	4:15
Sept. 15	DENVER	4:15	Nov. 17	at San Diego	4:05
Sept. 22	WASHINGTON	4:15	Nov. 25	PHI. (Mon.)	9:00
Sept. 29	Open date		Dec. 1	SEATTLE	4:15
Oct. 6	ST. LOUIS	4:15	Dec. 8	at Dallas	1:00
Oct. 14	at Sea. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 15	GREEN BAY	4:15
Oct. 20	at New Orleans	1:00	Dec. 21	at Ariz. (Sat.)	5:00
Oct. 27	ARIZONA	4:05	Dec. 30	at S.L. (Mon.)	9:00
Nov. 3	at Oakland	4:15	Strength of schedule: 3rd		

Cornerback Mike Rumph was the first of the 49ers' 10 picks in the draft and will be asked to immediately deal with the team's most pressing problem: stopping the dynamic offense of the Rams, who have a six-game winning streak against the 49ers.

And it's not just roster upgrades that have the 49ers excited. Their young roster has gained another year of experience, which should be most significant on the defense, which flashed its potential by pitching three shutouts in the last six regular-season games.

The 49ers were lucky with injuries and a less-than-grueling schedule last year. So it's entirely possible they can be a better team and finish with a worse record in 2002. Plus, they enter a revised NFC West that offers few freebies and still has the Rams.

COACHING Strategies

The 49ers will try to get the ball to wide receiver Terrell Owens as much as possible. As disruptive as his constant complaints about the play calling were, he had a point. As the season went on, teams were able to defuse his explosiveness. This year, the coaches will try to make better use of him and do more to complement him with J.J. Stokes and Tai Streets.

The area where the 49ers figure to make their biggest changes is pass defense. They

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

You hear about a splintered front office and a rift between coach and star receiver, but it's easy to see why **Steve Mariucci** turned down Tampa Bay. Why leave now? This is an emerging team with a lot of youth and attitude. ... The strength right now is the young, aggressive defense. Coordinator **Jim Mora** has done an outstanding job molding this group.

Bryant Young is the defensive line anchor and still can dominate when he's healthy. **Andre Carter** came on strong as a rookie and should become a premier pass rusher. They've drafted a couple of good, high-motor linebackers in **Jeff Ulbrich** and **Jamie Winborn**. **Julian Peterson** needs to step it up a notch. He has the most talent but lacks the motor to be consistent. Cornerbacks **Ahmed**

OUTSIDE

Carter



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

VIEW

THE 49ERS

Plummer and **Jason Webster** are solid and workmanlike, but they needed a third guy to challenge the Rams. So drafting **Mike Rumph** in the first round was smart. I also love their fourth-round pick, safety **Kevin Curtis**. He'll upgrade an already solid special teams. It didn't surprise me they let (strong safety) **Lance Schulters** go. (Free safety) **Zack Bronson** had a better year, and signing strong safety **Tony Parrish** was a good move. ... They hit on a free-agent quarterback nobody wanted, **Jeff Garcia**. He'll take his shots and is tough for a small guy, but he needs to stay healthy or they're in trouble. ... **Terrell Owens** speaks his mind, but he's a legit star player. What they need is more production from the other wide-outs, who I feel are a bunch of underachievers.

added **Rumph** and safety **Kevin Curtis** in the draft to boost their nickel secondary, and they signed free-agent pass rusher **Sean Moran**. They don't want to be burned by teams such as St. Louis that use four receivers. The entire league saw how effective a stacked secondary could be when the Patriots knocked off the Rams in the Super Bowl using five, six and seven defensive backs.

The running game, which ranked second in the NFL last year, should be just as effective because the 49ers retained three key free agents: tailback **Garrison Hearst**, fullback **Fred Beasley** and center **Jeremy Newberry**.

Style—Owens wasn't afraid to chastise coach **Steve Mariucci** for being too conservative

with his play calling last year. And a front office that seemed almost excited about the prospect of their coach leaving for Tampa Bay in the offseason may agree. One of the most well-respected offensive minds in the game relied heavily on the running game last year as the 49ers won 12 games. So, what's wrong with that? Conservative was getting the job done. This year, **Mariucci** will be evaluated harshly by the media and his bosses if the 49ers don't continue on their blazing path. But if he wins 10 or more games, returns to the playoffs and—most important—wins at least one playoff game, he'll be openly cheered and congratulated.

Aside from **Owens**, players love **Mariucci's** energetic and optimistic personality. Some of the free agents retained by the team say they would have left had **Mariucci** departed. Veterans and young players alike enjoy playing for him and get excited by his fiery speeches. That kind of energy and optimism runs throughout the coaching staff, most notably in defensive coordinator **Jim Mora**, a once-criticized coach who has blossomed along with the wealth of defensive talent the 49ers have acquired in recent drafts. **Mora's** speeches during games are more intense than **Mariucci's**. And **Mora's** adjustments have been outstanding.

Offensive line coach **Pat Morris** is a player favorite and an orchestrator of the running game, taking up where longtime great **Bobb McKittrick** left off. **GRADE: A-**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Jeff Garcia's value to the team cannot be understated. And the 49ers have been fortunate that this 6-1, 195-pound mobile quarterback has been durable. Garcia hasn't missed a start in back-to-back Pro Bowl seasons, despite his penchant for leaving the pocket and his disdain for sliding to the ground or running out of bounds.

The 49ers hope they don't have to use backup **Tim Rattay**, who is entering his third season. He is far more ready to enter the fray

than in the past and is a fluid passer, but he's not nearly ready for a starting role on a playoff team.

Rookie quarterback **Brandon Doman**, a fifth-round pick, will contend for a roster spot. While he was at **BYU**, **Doman's** mobile, athletic style was compared with **Garcia's**.

Garcia's mobility should be improved this year after he spent most of last season nursing rib and knee injuries that began with a hit from Bears linebacker **Brian Urlacher**.

Garcia's ability to improvise and gain first downs with his feet again will be a key factor in the offense.

GRADE: A-

Running backs—If anyone was disappointed that the 49ers retained **Hearst** as a free agent, it probably was **Kevan Barlow**, who is eager to become the team's feature back after a solid rookie year.

Hearst and **Barlow** again will lead one of the league's most formidable rushing attacks, especially because the 49ers improved their offensive line and retained **Beasley**, a superior blocking fullback.

The rotation system brought out the best in **Hearst** and **Barlow**, who took turns churning out yards. **Barlow**, who is much younger, battled more injury problems last

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. The 49ers will beat the Rams—but only once. Readers may notice this is a repeat prediction that failed last year. But it is the 49ers' obsession.
2. The 49ers won't win a playoff game. If the Rams win the NFC West—again—the 49ers must go the route of a wild-card team, and that's a tough road.
3. **Jeff Garcia** will miss a few games. A quarterback as fearless as **Garcia** can't stay healthy forever.
4. The **Steve Mariucci-Terrell Owens** issue won't bubble over. **Owens** doesn't love his coach, but no player wants to win more. **Mariucci** appreciates that and will continue to do whatever he can to defuse the situation.
5. **WR J.J. Stokes** finally will begin to achieve his potential. He willingly took a pay cut but wanted assurances the team believed in him. Pride in his work will lift him to a career-best season.



Stokes

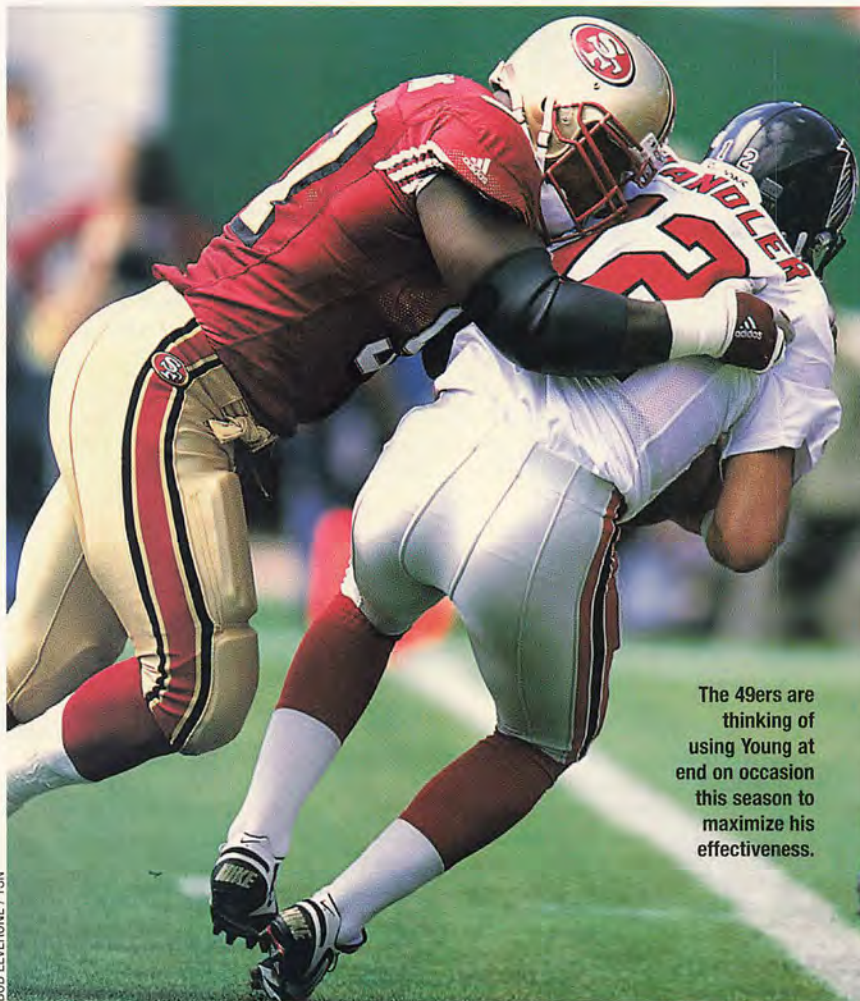
2001 results

Sept. 9	ATLANTA (OT)	W	16-13
Sept. 23	ST. LOUIS	L	26-30
Oct. 1	at N.Y. Jets	W	19-17
Oct. 7	CAROLINA	W	24-14
Oct. 14	at Atlanta (OT)	W	37-31
Oct. 21	Open date		
Oct. 28	at Chicago (OT)	L	31-37
Nov. 4	DETROIT	W	21-13
Nov. 11	NEW ORLEANS	W	28-27
Nov. 18	at Carolina (OT)	W	25-22
Nov. 25	at Indianapolis	W	40-21
Dec. 2	BUFFALO	W	35-0
Dec. 9	at St. Louis	L	14-27
Dec. 16	MIAMI	W	21-0
Dec. 22	PHILADELPHIA	W	13-3
Dec. 30	at Dallas	L	21-27
Jan. 6	at New Orleans	W	38-0
Jan. 13	at Green Bay*	L	15-25

*NFC playoff game.

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BOB LEVERONE / TSN

The 49ers are thinking of using Young at end on occasion this season to maximize his effectiveness.

year. But by rotating the determined and powerful Hearst and the elusive Barlow, the 49ers kept defenses guessing. Both are dangerous after catching screen passes, a staple in the 49ers' version of the West Coast offense.

Hearst received a hefty contract, a reward for returning so impressively after rehabilitating an ankle injury for two full seasons. His 2001 season was as inspiring as it was effective, and he is a locker room favorite.

Backup fullback Terry Jackson is a special teams standout and a nice change of pace as a single back who can carry the ball with some power. **GRADE: B+**

Receivers—The day before the draft Stokes agreed to a significant pay cut because the 49ers assured him he still fit in their plans. The team backed it up by not drafting a wide receiver. But now it is Stokes' turn to step up. After seven underwhelming seasons, he is the 49ers' best chance to keep defenses honest in their coverage of Owens. Stokes lacks the ability to get separation downfield, but he is a big target with ability to gain yards after the catch. Garcia especially looks for him in the red zone.

Owens might be the best receiver in the league. Unlike Vikings star Randy Moss,

Owens is one of the hardest-working wide-outs in the NFL. Moss and Owens both run their mouths, but while Moss admits to taking some plays off, Owens pushes himself to make big-time blocks and works his tail off in practice. Still, Owens would be more satisfied if Mariucci and Garcia allowed him

to fight for more balls against double coverage. When Stokes and Streets aren't producing, Owens is covered with two-deep zones that limit his production.

Streets has shown flashes throughout his injury-riddled career. Perhaps this will be his breakout season now that he's a full year removed from surgery to repair a broken leg late in 2000.

Tight end Eric Johnson heads into his second season after making his case as the steal of the draft last year. The seventh-round pick topped all rookie tight ends in every offensive category and reminded some in the Bay Area of Brent Jones. **GRADE: B+**

Line—A once-unheralded unit now must be considered one of the NFL's best. After finishing No. 2 in rushing, the 49ers returned all but one starter—Brown—who was replaced by Stone at left guard. The 49ers were not unhappy with Brown and may bring him back as a coach or in a front-office role, but they couldn't resist the opportunity to inject a much-younger Pro Bowl player.

Stone is similar to Brown in that he's a mammoth power run blocker. In the middle is another Pro Bowl player: Newberry, a superior run blocker and good pass protector who calls the signals for the line. And powerful right tackle Scott Gragg has been solid since he joined the team in 2000. The other starters—right guard Dave Fiore and left tackle Derrick Deese—are holdovers from the 49ers' old philosophy of using smaller, athletic and versatile linemen. Fiore and Deese each have started games at guard, tackle and center.

The front-line players form an impressive unit, but depth could be an issue. The 49ers ignored their line until the seventh round of the draft. But they re-signed free-agent backup Matt Willig, a veteran who is a sturdy fill-in at tackle and guard. **GRADE: A-**

DEFENSE Line—This was the biggest disappointment last season. The

2002 draft picks

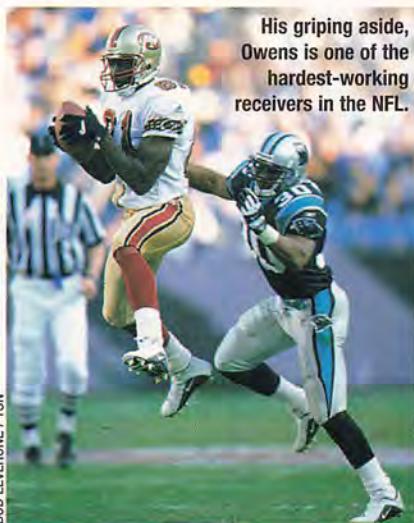
Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-27	Mike Rumph	CB	Miami (Fla.)	Has the big body (6-2, 205) the 49ers were lacking at cornerback.
3-69	Saleem Rasheed	LB	Alabama	Not big but a great athlete who can play inside or outside.
4-102	Jeff Chandler	K	Florida	Rarely faced a pressure kick in college, but that will change.
4-127	Kevin Curtis	DB	Texas Tech	49ers like character guys who were leaders at major colleges.
5-163	Brandon Doman	QB	Brigham Young	Questionable arm strength, but that doesn't matter in this offense.
5-172	Josh Shaw	DT	Michigan State	Injuries caused his draft stock to fall; could be a steal in fifth round.
6-201	Mark Anelli	TE	Wisconsin	Faces an uphill climb to make the roster.
7-239	Eric Heitmann	G	Stanford	Odds are helped because he plays at a position that lacks depth.
7-248	Kyle Kosier	OT	Arizona State	Can play guard or tackle and has the frame to add weight.
7-256	Teddy Gaines	DB	Tennessee	Small, fast corner will fight for spot on special teams.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-26	Jim Druckenmiller	QB	Virginia Tech	Out of football
'98-28	R.W. McQuarters	DB	Oklahoma State	Starter with Bears
'99-24	Reggie McGrew	DT	Florida	Backup with 49ers
'00-16	Julian Peterson	LB	Michigan State	Starter with 49ers
'01-24	Ahmed Plummer	CB	Ohio State	Starter with 49ers
'01-7	Andre Carter	DE	California	Starter with 49ers

49ers like their talent, which includes veteran tackles Bryant Young and Dana Stubblefield and right end Andre Carter, a first-round pick in 2001. However, the pass rush was lacking at times in 2001. You can bet Mora is devising some ways to change that, probably by using a growing unit of linebackers in the pass rush.

Carter, who improved each week during his rookie season, has great potential. He finished with 6½ sacks, including two in Week 17, but now Carter, the 49ers' best athlete not named Owens, has both a full season and a full offseason to draw from. He knows the league better, and the 49ers have come to expect second-year defenders to break out, as cornerbacks Ahmed Plummer and Jason Webster did last season.



His griping aside, Owens is one of the hardest-working receivers in the NFL.

The left end position is a joint effort. John Engelberger, Chike Okeafor and the newly acquired Moran are in the mix. And the team is considering one other intriguing possibility: using Young at end on occasion.

Rookie tackle Josh Shaw is worth watching. He was a late fifth-round selection because of a major knee injury during his senior year at Michigan State. But if he recovers, as expected, he might be a steal. **GRADE: B-**

Linebackers—The most improved unit from 2000 to 2001 got a nice boost when the 49ers selected Saleem Rasheed with an early third-round pick. Rasheed can help immediately on special teams. He has the ability and athleticism to play inside or outside. For now, he adds depth to a very young, very fast, already-deep linebacker unit.

The 49ers' mantra while rebuilding their defense was "young, fast and healthy." In 2000, the team drafted outside linebacker Julian Peterson and inside 'backer Jeff Ulbrich, both of whom settled into starting roles last season. Roving tackler Jamie Winborn was added in 2001 and the versatile Rasheed this year. Plus, the team provided field leadership with middle linebacker Derek Smith, who joined the 49ers as a free agent in 2001 and became a starter. The

team rotates those linebackers in and out of games, which helps to keep one of the league's fastest units fresh. There is no star, however, and the team's linebackers occasionally have problems wrapping up on their tackles.

Like Carter, Winborn can make a big leap in his second season. He took big strides throughout last season after looking badly out of place often during preseason. This also could be a breakout year for Peterson. Though he started 14 games last season, injuries kept him from showing much improvement. **GRADE: B-**

Secondary—Plummer emerged as a fine NFL cornerback during his second season. He is one of the better young defensive backs in the league, and his running mate, Webster, wasn't half-bad, either. They went from a shaky twosome in 2000 to a pair of corners who rarely were beaten deep.

The problem was the drop-off after Plummer and Webster, which was easily exposed by teams with three- and four-receiver sets. The 49ers hope Rumph, a long and strong 6-2, 205-pounder from national champion Miami, can shore up the nickel defense by jamming some of the league's larger receivers at the line of scrimmage. Rookie safety Curtis, who also has good size (6-2, 212), might get action in the nickel if he proves an upgrade over backup safeties Ronnie Heard and John Keith.

Gone is strong safety Schulters, an emotional and inspiring leader. The 49ers hope Parrish, who was a four-year starter with the Bears, can replace Schulters as a hard-hitting safety. The team needs Parrish to be equally adept at stopping the run, blitzing the quarterback and picking up deep receivers. Parrish and Schulters have similar playing styles, so the 49ers moved quickly to sign Parrish after Schulters left as a free agent.

The 49ers locked up free safety Zack Bronson with a long-term deal after he had a breakout season with seven interceptions. He has a better feel for making a move for the ball than any defensive back on the team. And he's not a bad hitter, either. **GRADE: B**

SPECIAL TEAMS The roster is stacked with so many fast, young athletes that the coverage units are shaping up to be outstanding in a league in which teams often don't emphasize them enough. Jackson, the backup fullback, is the undisputed leader on special teams. The 49ers let Terry Killens, another special teams veteran, get away during the offseason. However, the presence of Rasheed, a special teams standout at Alabama despite his status as the team's premier linebacker, should soften that blow.

But while the coverage units are a strength, most of the specialists are question marks. The team may need to find a kicker if fourth-round pick Jeff Chandler—the first kicker selected in the draft—doesn't pan out. Jose Cortez started last season

Moves

Key additions

DE Sean Moran	Free agent/Rams
S Tony Parrish	Free agent/Bears
G Ron Stone	Free agent/Giants

Key losses

TE Greg Clark	Free agent
G Ray Brown	Free agent
S Lance Schulters	Free agent/Titans

Stadium/Media

San Francisco Stadium (70,270, grass).

Ticket information: 415-656-4900.

Training site: University of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif.; 209-932-4949.

Radio: KGO-AM (810).

Website: www.49ers.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 12-4 (2nd in NFC West); 6-2 in division; 8-4 in conference; 4-0 vs. AFC; 7-1 at home; 5-3 on road; 3-2 on artificial turf; 9-2 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Lost to Green Bay, 25-15, in NFC wild-card game.

Steve Mariucci's regular-season record: 47-33 in five seasons with 49ers.

Mariucci's postseason record: 2-3 in three appearances with 49ers.

Team record last five years: 47-33 (.588, ranks 9th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	NFC	NFL
Total offense	*355.6	2	4
Rushing offense	*140.3	1	2
Passing offense	*215.3	8	14
Scoring offense	409	2	3
Total defense	*309.6	7	13
Rushing defense	*98.2	4	9
Passing defense	*211.4	9	19
Scoring defense	282	6	9
Takeaways	34	T5	T9
Giveaways	19	1	1
Turnover differential	15	2	3
Sacks	32	9	T23
Sacks allowed	26	3	4

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Steve Mariucci	Head coach	11	6
Greg Knapp	Offensive coordinator	8	8
Jim Mora	Defensive coordinator	18	6
Jerry Attaway	Physical dev. coordinator	20	20
Tom Batta	Tight ends	9	4
Chris Beake	Defensive assistant	4	4
Dwayne Board	Defensive line	13	13
Bruce DeHaven	Special teams	16	3
Terrell Jones	Strength dev. coordinator	3	3
Brett Maxie	Secondary	5	4
Patrick Morris	Offensive line	6	6
Dan Quinn	Defensive quality control	2	2
Tom Rathman	Running backs	6	6
Richard Smith	Linebackers	15	6
George Stewart	Wide receivers	14	7
Andy Sugarman	Offensive assistant	5	5
Jason Tarver	Offensive quality control	2	2
Ted Tollner	Quarterbacks	7	1

REALIGNMENT reality

For the 49ers, it's a harsh reality. With four divisions in each conference, a wild-card team can't host a playoff game anymore. So to play at home during the postseason, the 49ers need to win their division, which at last check was locked in the grip of the mighty Rams. Those lucky Saints, Falcons and Panthers escaped the twice-a-season dates with the Rams, but the 49ers are stuck in the NFC West with the defending NFC champs. The 49ers also lost six often-desirable dates with Atlanta, New Orleans and Atlanta. San Francisco was 6-0 against those three teams last season. New division opponents Seattle and Arizona aren't overwhelming foes, but they will be difficult to sweep. Seattle almost made the playoffs last season, and the Cardinals appear to be on the rise. On the plus side, the 49ers won't have three long trips to the Southeast anymore.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

In his second season, Plummer emerged as a solid cornerback who rarely was beaten deep.

strong but fizzled down the stretch on field goals and kickoffs. Punter Jason Baker was only average as a rookie, though he showed a strong enough leg to expect improvement. The one mainstay is long snapper Brian Jennings, whose job security is surpassed only by Garcia's and Owens'.

The 49ers had hoped to select a return specialist, but only if he could help at receiver or in the secondary. They didn't find one, so the job remains Vinny Sutherland's to lose. Sutherland was average as a rookie, but another year of experience might help him. However, the team will be watching the waiver wire for some low-cost competition or a veteran return man.

GRADE: C+

BOTTOM LINE Minimal injuries. Close wins. Almost everything went right for the 49ers last year. So there is a chance that the 2002 team will be better but not receive as many breaks and miss the playoffs. But there is greater reason to think the 49ers, with their young, improving roster, will put up another double-digit victory total and secure a postseason berth.

TSN

Mike Triplett covers the 49ers for the Sacramento Bee.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Terrell Owens
	■ Cedrick Wilson
LT	■ Derrick Deese
	■ Matt Willig
LG	● Ron Stone
	■ Matt Willig
C	● Jeremy Newberry
	■ Dave Fiore
RG	■ Dave Fiore
	■ Matt Willig
RT	■ Scott Gragg
	■ Matt Willig
TE	■ Eric Johnson
	■ Justin Swift
WR	■ J.J. Stokes
	■ Tai Streets
QB	● Jeff Garcia
	■ Tim Rattay
RB	■ Garrison Hearst
	■ Kevan Barlow
FB	● Fred Beasley
	■ Terry Jackson

Defense

LE	■ John Engelberger
	■ Sean Moran
LT	● Bryant Young
	■ John Schlecht
RT	■ Dana Stubblefield
	■ Reggie McGrew
RE	● Andre Carter
	■ Chike Okefor
LLB	■ Julian Peterson
	■ Saleem Rasheed
MLB	■ Derek Smith
	■ Jeff Ulbrich
RLB	■ Jeff Ulbrich
	■ Jamie Winborn
LCB	● Ahmad Plummer
	■ Mike Rumph
RCB	■ Jason Webster
	■ Anthony Parker
SS	■ Tony Parrish
	■ Kevin Curtis
FS	■ Zack Bronson
	■ Ronnie Heard

Specialists

K	■ Jeff Chandler
P	■ Jason Baker
KR	■ Vinny Sutherland
PR	■ Vinny Sutherland
LS	● Brian Jennings
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	■ Fringe player

49ERS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
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Quarterbacks

11	Doman, Brandon	6-1/210	12-29-76	R	Brigham Young	D5a/02	—
5	Garcia, Jeff	6-1/195	2-24-70	4	San Jose State	FA/99	16/16
13	Rattay, Tim	6-0/215	3-15-77	3	Louisiana Tech	D7a/00	3/0

Running backs

32	Barlow, Kevan	6-1/238	1-7-79	2	Pittsburgh	D3/01	15/0
40	Beasley, Fred (FB)	6-0/246	9-18-74	5	Auburn	D6/98	15/12
20	Hearst, Garrison	5-11/215	1-4-71	10	Georgia	FA/97	16/16
22	Jackson, Terry (FB)	6-0/232	1-10-76	4	Florida	D5a/99	16/1
43	Lewis, Jonas	5-9/210	12-27-76	3	San Diego State	FA/00	1/0
27	Smith, Paul	5-11/234	1-31-78	3	Texas-El Paso	D5a/00	15/0

Receivers

85	Anelli, Mark (TE)	6-3/265	6-5-79	R	Wisconsin	D6/02	—
86	Jennings, Brian (TE)	6-5/245	10-14-76	3	Arizona State	D7/00	16/0
82	Johnson, Eric (TE)	6-3/256	9-15-79	2	Yale	D7b/01	16/14
81	Owens, Terrell	6-3/226	12-7-73	7	Tennessee-Chatt.	D3/96	16/16
83	Stokes, J.J.	6-4/217	10-6-72	8	UCLA	D1/95	16/16
89	Streets, Tai	6-2/206	4-20-77	4	Michigan	D6/99	16/3
25	Sutherland, Vinny	5-8/188	4-22-78	2	Purdue	FA/01	15/0
88	Swift, Justin (TE)	6-3/265	8-14-75	3	Kansas State	FA/00	16/2
84	Wilson, Cedrick	5-10/179	12-17-78	2	Tennessee	D6a/01	6/0

Offensive linemen

65	Brown, Ray (G)	6-5/318	12-12-62	17	Arkansas State	FA/96	16/16
76	Costa, Dave (T)	6-5/307	9-8-78	2	Wisconsin	FA/01	14/0
63	Deese, Derrick (T)	6-3/289	5-17-70	11	Southern California	FA/92	16/16
74	Fiore, Dave (G)	6-4/290	8-10-74	7	Hofstra	FA/97	16/16
78	Gragg, Scott (T)	6-8/325	2-28-72	8	Montana	D2/95	16/16
66	Heitmann, Eric (G)	6-3/305	2-24-80	R	Stanford	D7a/02	—
79	Kosier, Kyle (T)	6-5/293	1-27-78	R	Arizona State	D7b/02	—
62	Newberry, Jeremy (G)	6-5/304	3-23-76	5	California	D2/98	15/15
60	Stone, Ron (G)	6-5/320	7-20-71	9	Boston College	UFA/02	15/15
77	Willig, Matt (T)	6-8/315	1-21-69	11	Southern California	UFA/00	15/0

Defensive linemen

96	Carter, Andre (E)	6-4/265	5-12-79	2	California	D1/01	15/15
95	Engelberger, John (E)	6-4/260	10-18-76	3	Virginia Tech	D2a/00	15/14
92	McGrew, Reggie (T)	6-1/312	12-16-76	4	Florida	D1/99	12/0
71	Moran, Sean (E)	6-4/275	6-5-73	7	Colorado State	UFA/02	16/1
91	Okefor, Chike (E)	6-4/254	3-27-76	4	Purdue	D3/99	14/3
93	Schlecht, John (T)	6-0/290	5-23-78	2	Minnesota	FA/01	8/0
90	Setzer, Bobby (E)	6-4/280	6-16-76	2	Boise State	FA/01	14/0
72	Shaw, Josh (T)	6-2/279	9-7-79	R	Michigan State	D5b/02	—
94	Stubblefield, Dana (T)	6-2/290	11-14-70	10	Kansas	FA/01	16/16
97	Young, Bryant (T)	6-3/291	1-27-72	9	Notre Dame	D1/94	16/16

Linebackers

98	Peterson, Julian	6-3/235	7-28-78	3	Michigan State	D1a/00	14/14
51	Rasheed, Saleem	6-2/229	6-15-81	R	Alabama	D3/02	—
50	Smith, Derek	6-2/245	1-18-75	6	Arizona State	UFA/01	14/14
54	Stewart, Quincy	6-1/220	3-27-78	2	Louisiana Tech	FA/01	16/0
53	Ulbrich, Jeff	6-0/249	2-17-77	3	Hawaii	D3b/00	14/14
55	Winborn, Jamie	5-11/242	5-14-79	2	Vanderbilt	D2/01	14/4

Defensive backs

31	Bronson, Zack (S)	6-1/201	1-28-74	6	McNeese State	FA/97	16/16
46	Curtis, Kevin (S)	6-2/212	7-28-80	R	Texas Tech	D4b/02	—
30	Gaines, Teddy (CB)	5-11/165	9-12-79	R	Tennessee	D7c/02	—
38	Heard, Ronnie (S)	6-3/215	10-5-76	3	Mississippi	FA/00	16/0
26	Holman, Rashad (CB)	5-11/191	1-17-78	2	Louisville	D6b/01	16/1
28	Keith, John (S)	6-0/207	2-4-77	3	Furman	D4/00	1/0
21	Parker, Anthony (CB)	6-1/200	12-4-75	4	Weber State	D4a/99	5/0
33	Parrish, Tony (S)	6-0/210	11-23-75	5	Washington	UFA/02	16/16
29	Plummer, Ahmed (CB)	6-0/191	3-26-76	3	Ohio State	D1b/00	15/15
24	Rumph, Mike (CB)	6-2/205	11-8-79	R	Miami (Fla.)	D1/02	—
36	Webster, Jason (CB)	5-10/180	9-8-77	3	Texas A&M	D2b/00	16/16
23	Williams, Jimmy (CB)	5-11/189	3-10-79	2	Vanderbilt	FA/01	10/0

Specialists

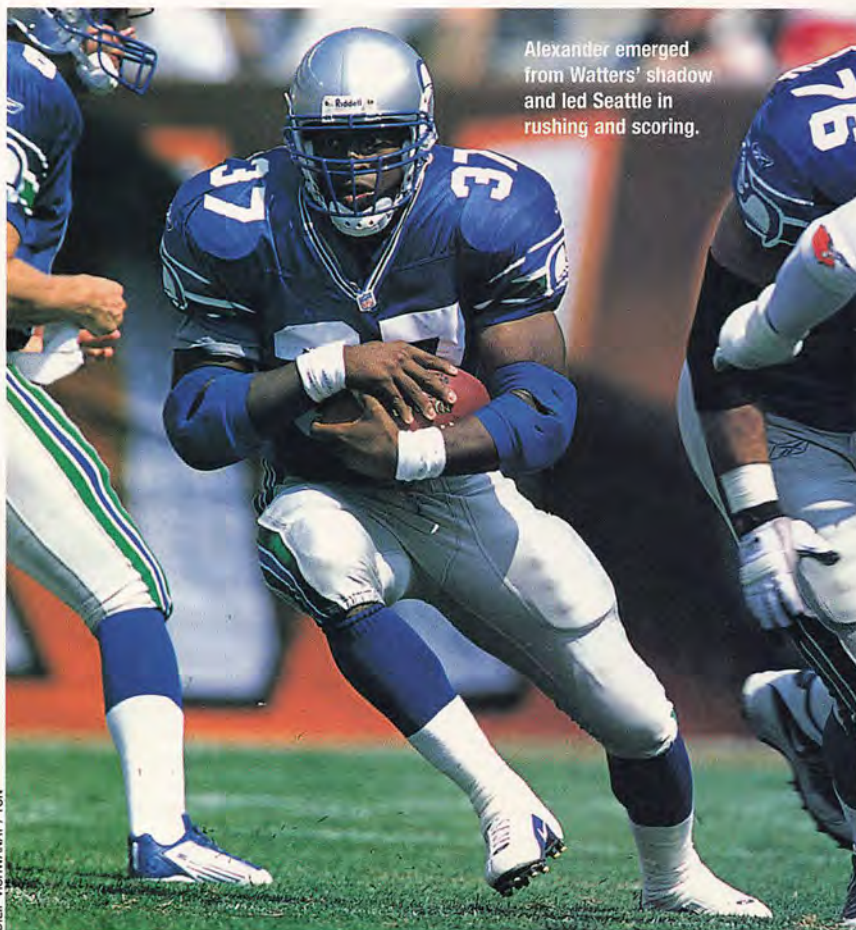
7	Baker, Jason (P)	6-1/195	5-17-78	2	Iowa	FA/01	16/0
3	Chandler, Jeff (K)	6-2/218	6-18-79	R	Florida	D4a/02	—
6	Cortez, Jose (K)	5-11/205	5-27-75	2	Oregon State	FA/01	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: DE/DT Junior Bryant, QB Giovanni Carmazzi, DE Jerome Davis, DE Mension Holloway, G Chad Ward.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Seahawks



Alexander emerged from Watters' shadow and led Seattle in rushing and scoring.

DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

BY CLARE FARNSWORTH

In the avalanche of change surrounding the Seahawks, Mike Holmgren is suggesting something that would be really different. "We're very close to being a very good team," the fourth-year coach and general manager says.

The Seahawks made a late-season run in 2001, winning three of their final four games to finish 9-7 and just short of a post-season berth. They will have to perform even better than that to be a player in the new NFC West that includes the high-powered Rams, resurgent 49ers and improving Cardinals.

This is an important season for Holmgren, who is 24-24 since being given a fortune by club owner Paul Allen in 1999 to alter the Seahawks' fortunes. The team hasn't been to the playoffs in back-to-back seasons since 1987-88 and hasn't won 10 games since 1986. Seattle hasn't won a playoff game since the 1984 season.

"Hopefully, all that is about to change," Holmgren says.

A few things already have changed:

New home field. The unnamed \$430 million stadium complex the team will move into this season was built on the site of the old Kingdome.

New conference and division. The Seahawks were a member of the NFC West in their inaugural 1976 season before moving into the AFC West for the past 25 years.

New starting quarterback—again. Trent Dilfer will try to succeed where Jon Kitna, Brock Huard and Matt Hasselbeck failed in Holmgren's version of the West Coast offense.

New uniforms, logo and colors. The team's new look has enough tweaks that you might not recognize the Seahawks as the same old birds.

"We look better," cornerback Shawn Springs says. "Now we just have to play better."

COACHING Strategies—Simply put, what the Seahawks' coaches try to do is be the aggressor—on offense and defense—

by creating mismatches.

Unfortunately, it is a philosophy that too often has not been matched by performance the past 2½ seasons. Remember, the Seahawks started 8-2 in Holmgren's first season. Since then, they are 16-23—including a fall-from-ahead loss to the Dolphins in a playoff game after the 1999 season.

Holmgren's teams traditionally pass 60 percent of the time, with the philosophy being that it is much easier to complete a 6-yard pass than it is to break a 6-yard run. The keys to this scheme are having receivers who can stretch the defense—vertically and horizontally—and a quarterback who can get the ball to the right receiver, at the right time, with the right throw.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

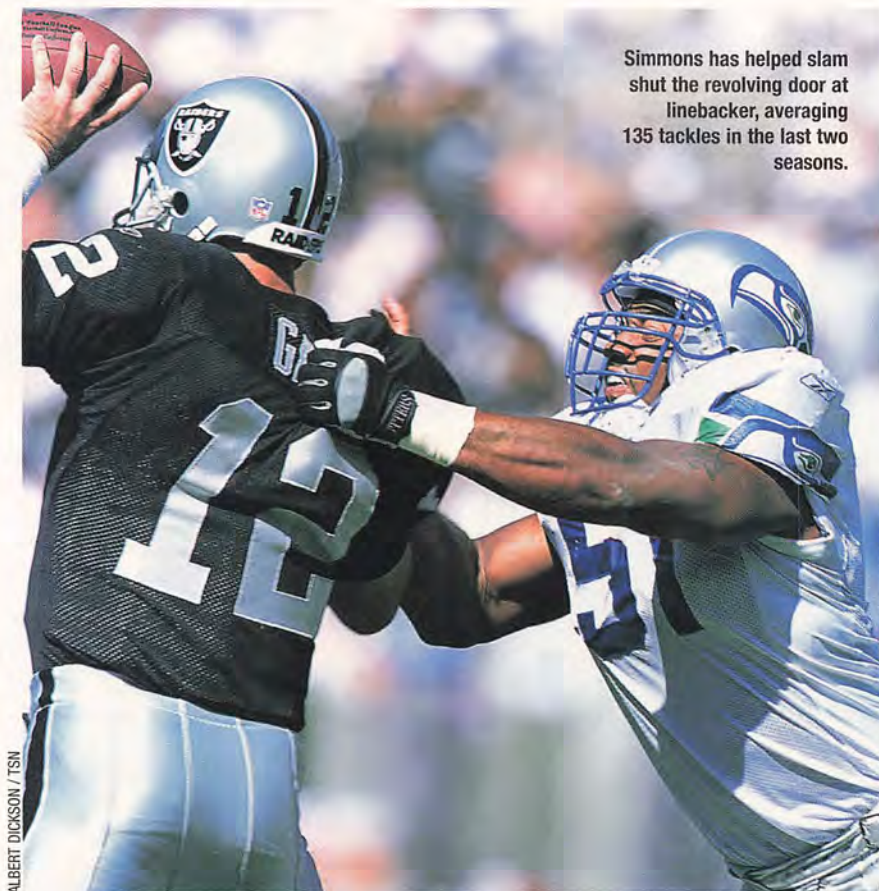
Sept. 8	at Oakland	4:15	Nov. 10	at Arizona	4:05
Sept. 15	ARIZONA	4:05	Nov. 17	DENVER	4:15
Sept. 22	at N.Y. Giants	4:15	Nov. 24	KANSAS CITY	4:05
Sept. 29	MINNESOTA	8:30	Dec. 1	at San Fran.	4:15
Oct. 6	Open date		Dec. 8	PHILADELPHIA	4:05
Oct. 14	S.F. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 15	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 20	at St. Louis	1:00	Dec. 22	ST. LOUIS	4:05
Oct. 27	at Dallas	1:00	Dec. 29	at San Diego	4:15
Nov. 3	WASHINGTON	4:15	Strength of schedule: T 4th		

Holmgren was forced to tweak, and at times abandon, this approach last season because of the inexperience at quarterback, wide receiver and running back. It created an identity crisis, which often led to the inability to pass or run effectively. That will change this season, with the commitment to Dilfer as the starting quarterback, Shaun Alexander stepping from the imposing shadow of the departed Ricky Watters at running back and the added experience and maturity of Darrell Jackson and Koren Robinson at receiver.

On defense, coordinator Steve Sidwell's goal is to stop the run in order to earn the right to rush the passer. The Seahawks improved at stopping the run last season. The goal this season is to show similar improvement in the pass rush.

Style—As hands-on as Holmgren can be, he also can come across as aloof. That's why it is important for him to have assistants who are teachers and players who are leaders.

When things started going south in the 1-5 slide to close the 1999 season, Holmgren all but begged for some veteran leadership to emerge. It never happened. To improve in that area, he signed defensive tackle John Randle, linebacker Levon Kirkland and free safety Marcus Robertson last year, and it's a big part of the reason he re-signed Dilfer this year.



Simmons has helped slam shut the revolving door at linebacker, averaging 135 tackles in the last two seasons.

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

As Holmgren puts it, "I got tired of waiting for leaders to emerge, so I went out and got some." Meanwhile, he is trying to mold the young players on his roster into players who can help the team win now rather than later. The Seahawks could open the season with as few as nine players from the team Holmgren inherited four years ago. That's why Holmgren has surrounded himself with a staff that preaches precision and expects players to practice that way the minute they arrive in Seattle. **GRADE: B-**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Dilfer joined the team last August in an after-thought signing. He helped the Ravens win a Super Bowl title after the 2000 season but ended up coming to Seattle as a backup after other teams passed on him as a starter in the free-agent market. Dilfer went 4-0 as a starter after injuries sidelined Hasselbeck. Dilfer became the permanent starter this offseason when Holmgren came to the realization that Dilfer gives the Seahawks the best chance to win and re-signed him.

As strange as it might sound, Dilfer is a better fit for this offense than any of the other quarterbacks Holmgren has tried to hand the job to. Dilfer is not as mobile as Hasselbeck or Kitna, who left for the Bengals last year, but he reads defenses better and has learned the hard lesson that sometimes the best play is no play at all. Dilfer does not have the arm strength of Huard, who was

traded to the Colts in April, but he does not freeze under pressure and is better at throwing on the run. But will Dilfer be as effective when the pressure is on him from the start as he was the past two seasons while subbing for ineffective or injured players?

Hasselbeck returns to the backup role he manned for two seasons behind Brett Favre in Green Bay before being traded to the

Seahawks. But he is eager to prove himself by being better prepared to play the next time he gets a chance to start. Ryan Leaf, now with his fourth NFL team, will replace Huard as the No. 3 quarterback. **GRADE: C+**

Running backs—Why would Holmgren use a first-round draft choice two years ago on Alexander when he already had Watters? Why would Holmgren use a second-round pick this year on Maurice Morris after Alexander ran so well last season?

The answer to those questions is another question: What would the Seahawks have done if they didn't have Alexander last year, when Watters' incredible seven-year run of durability was snapped by two injuries? Alexander steps into the role of feature back after the team decided not to re-sign Watters. But as productive as Alexander was in starting 12 games last year—1,318 yards and a league-leading 14 rushing touchdowns—some adjustments will be needed.

His style is to slide along the line and then slash through a crease. Holmgren would prefer that he hit the hole quicker, sometimes settling for what little there is rather than taking a loss while trying to make something out of nothing. Also, despite his 44 receptions last season, Alexander is not as polished in the passing game as Watters. He needs work on his receiving and blocking. This is where Morris could help. He has soft hands and played in a West Coast-style offense at Oregon.

If there is an unsung hero on this team, it is aptly named fullback Mack Strong, an effective point-of-attack blocker who deserves some of the credit for Alexander's breakthrough season. **GRADE: B+**

Receivers—The wide receivers and tight ends are a study in potential vs. productivity. The club has spent first-round picks in the past two drafts on Robinson and rookie tight end Jeramy Stevens.

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-28	Jeramy Stevens	TE	Washington	Fills a huge hole—provided his off-field problems are thing of past.
2-54	Maurice Morris	RB	Oregon	Seahawks expect him to be a reliable backup to Shaun Alexander.
2-60	Anton Palepoi	DE	UNLV	Team was desperate for pass-rush help, but did it reach here?
3-85	Kris Richard	CB	Southern California	Team likes his size, and he showed big-play ability at USC.
4-120	Terreal Bierria	DB	Georgia	Big hitter will have to beat out two veterans (at least) for roster spot.
5-146	Rocky Bernard	DL	Texas A&M	Seahawks love big, strong, versatile D-linemen like Bernard.
5-169	Ryan Hannam	TE	Northern Iowa	Has a chance to win third TE spot behind Stevens and Itula Mili.
5-171	Matt Hill	OT	Boise State	Team hopes to groom Hill for backup tackle role.
6-194	Craig Jarrett	P	Michigan State	Has a strong leg, but technique and directional skills need work.
7-232	Jeff Kelly	QB	Southern Miss.	You just knew Holmgren would draft a QB after trading Huard.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-3	Shawn Springs	CB	Ohio State	Starter with Seahawks
'97-6	Walter Jones	OT	Florida State	Starter with Seahawks
'98-15	Anthony Simmons	LB	Clemson	Starter with Seahawks
'99-22	Lamar King	DE	Saginaw Valley St.	Starter with Seahawks
'00-19	Shaun Alexander	RB	Alabama	Starter with Seahawks
'00-22	Chris McIntosh	OT	Wisconsin	Starter with Seahawks
'01-9	Koren Robinson	WR	North Carolina St.	Starter with Seahawks
'01-17	Steve Hutchinson	G	Michigan	Starter with Seahawks

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

This is a talented team. What it lacks is stability at quarterback. The Seahawks think **Trent Dilfer** is the answer, but I'm not convinced. He's a good leader, but he can be erratic in the clutch. ... **Koren Robinson** will become a bigger part of the offense, and **Darrell Jackson** is vastly underrated—he's Pro Bowl caliber. But they really need a quality third wideout. ... I know **Mike Holmgren** is catching a lot of flak for drafting a tight end in the first round, but if **Jerramy Stevens** stays clean, he can be special. ... I like the makeup of the offensive line. The key is the development of right tackle **Chris McIntosh**. ... The defense has talent and depth, especially in the line. Look for **Lamar King** to have a big year. **John Randle** is still relentless, but they

OUTSIDE

Robinson



DILIP KISHAN/AT/TSN

VIEW

THE SEAHAWKS

need to keep him fresh. **Brandon Mitchell** is an underrated guy and was a solid free-agent acquisition. ... At linebacker, **Anthony Simmons** is a true warrior, a high-energy producer. **Chad Brown** is an excellent blitzing who gives the team a lot of flexibility. ... **Shawn Springs** is a shutdown corner who needs to have a big year. **Ken Lucas** needs some development, but he's a tough, confident player. I wasn't wild about them getting (free agent) **Doug Evans**. He lacks sudden movement skill and has lost a step. ... This is a playoff team if it can get consistency from Dilfer. There's too much talent across the board for it not to be. This is why Holmgren is feeling the heat lately, but he thrives on it. It will set them back if ownership gets impatient and pulls the plug on him.

Their best receiver, however, is Jackson, a third-round pick in 1999. He followed his surprising first season—when he led all rookies in receptions (53), receiving yards (713) and touchdown catches (six)—with 70 catches for 1,081 yards and eight touchdowns last season.

This year, Jackson needs some help. Robinson, who caught 39 passes last year, and Stevens can start by emulating Jackson's attention to detail. He gets open because he runs precise routes. He helps others get open because he sells his routes, even when he is not the primary receiver.

Robinson and Stevens can provide Holmgren's offense with two elements that have been missing. Robinson excels at making

yards after the catch, turning a short pass into a long gain. Stevens is a big target who can create matchup problems against zone coverage and in the red zone.

The Seahawks also need more from Bobby Engram, a savvy third-down option, and James Williams, who has more speed than the other wide receivers but needs to stay healthy. **GRADE: C+**

Line—Draft pick by draft pick, free agent by free agent, the Seahawks have assembled a solid group of linemen. So why haven't they been able to become five fingers forming a fist?

It baffles even the linemen. As center Robbie Tobeck puts it, "I look down the line, and it's, 'Good player, good player, good player, good player, good player.' So we should be better than we are. I don't know why we aren't."

One big reason is a lack of consistency. The last time the Seahawks started the same five linemen in consecutive seasons was 1987-88, which also is the last time they went to the playoffs in back-to-back years.

The switch this year comes at right tackle. Todd Weiner started 13 games last season because former first-round draft pick Chris McIntosh was bothered all season by a neck stinger he suffered during training camp. McIntosh had a bone spur removed that was aggravating his neck after the season, so he should be ready. That's good, because Weiner signed with the

Falcons as a free agent.

The rest of the line will remain, with Walter Jones at left tackle, Steve Hutchinson at left guard, Tobeck at center and Chris Gray at right guard.

Jones was voted to the Pro Bowl last season, and Hutchinson is a Pro Bowl player-in-waiting. This pair of former first-round picks forms an athletic and overpowering left side of the line. Tobeck and Gray lack prototypical size, but the former free-agent additions compensate with leverage

and tenacity.

The only backup lineman who has started a game in the NFL is Floyd Wedderburn, but he lost the right

guard spot to Gray last season because his intensity didn't match his imposing size (6-5, 333). Wedderburn could end up as the backup tackle this season, with another wide body, second-year man Floyd Womack, taking over as the top reserve at both guard spots.

GRADE: C+

DEFENSE

Line—For the past two seasons, the Seahawks have tried to free up end Michael Sinclair by having him flop from the left side to the right and back again. It was supposed to allow him to better use his quickness and compensate for his lack of bulk by keeping him away from the tight end. The ploy didn't work, so Sinclair and the pre-snap shuffling are gone.

Former first-round pick Lamar King has moved to the left side and will stay there. Antonio Cochran and free-agent addition Brandon Mitchell will vie for the spot King vacated on the right side.

The club solidified the middle of the line last year with the free-agent signings of Chad Eaton and Randle. Eaton plays over the center, jamming his 306-pound body into the middle of the fray. That allows Randle to play on the edge as the right tackle. They formed a successful combination, with Randle collecting a team-high 11 sacks and Eaton leading the linemen with 55 tackles.

With the exception of the high-rev Randle, the line could become a two-platoon

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Cleveland	W	9-6
Sept. 23	PHILADELPHIA	L	3-27
Sept. 30	at Oakland	L	14-38
Oct. 7	JACKSONVILLE	W	24-15
Oct. 14	DENVER	W	34-21
Oct. 21	Open date		
Oct. 28	MIAMI	L	20-24
Nov. 4	at Washington	L	14-27
Nov. 11	OAKLAND	W	34-27
Nov. 18	at Buffalo	W	23-20
Nov. 25	at Kansas City	L	7-19
Dec. 2	SAN DIEGO (OT)	W	13-10
Dec. 9	at Denver	L	7-20
Dec. 16	DALLAS	W	29-3
Dec. 23	at N.Y. Giants	L	24-27
Dec. 30	at San Diego	W	25-22
Jan. 6	KANSAS CITY	W	21-18

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. QB Trent Dilfer will lose a game. He enters the season having won his past 15 starts, including his only four for Seattle last season.
2. Rookie Jerramy Stevens will break the club record for receptions by a tight end. OK, so it's only 37, but Stevens is a perfect fit for the West Coast offense.
3. RB Shaun Alexander and G Steve Hutchinson will take giant steps toward the Pro Bowl. Alexander will be even better as a starter than he was as a backup to Ricky Watters, which will draw attention to Hutchinson.
4. The special teams, which slumped last year, will be better. The improvement must start with erratic K Rian Lindell.
5. Anthony Simmons, the best linebacker no one has ever heard of, finally will get his due when he puts up his third consecutive 100-plus tackle season for an improved team.



Dilfer

Moves

Key additions

CB Doug Evans	Free agent/Panthers
DL Brandon Mitchell	Free agent/Patriots
QB Ryan Leaf	Free agent

Key losses

TE Christian Fauria	Free agent/Patriots
QB Brock Huard	Trade/Colts
KR Charlie Rogers	Expansion draft/Texans
DE Michael Sinclair	Free agent
RB Ricky Watters	Free agent
OT Todd Weiner	Free agent/Falcons

Stadium/Media

Seahawks Stadium (67,000, artificial).

Ticket information: 800-635-4295.

Training site: Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Wash.; 425-827-9777.

Radio: KIRO-AM (710).

Website: www.seahawks.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 9-7 (2nd in AFC West); 5-3 in division; 8-4 in conference; 1-3 vs. NFC; 6-2 at home; 3-5 on road; 7-2 on artificial turf; 2-5 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Mike Holmgren's regular-season record: 24-24 in three seasons with Seahawks; 99-61 overall in 10 seasons with Seahawks and Packers.

Holmgren's postseason record: 0-1 in one appearance with Seahawks; 9-6 overall in seven appearances with Seahawks and Packers (1-1 in Super Bowls).

Team record last five years: 40-40 (.500, ranks 18th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1999.

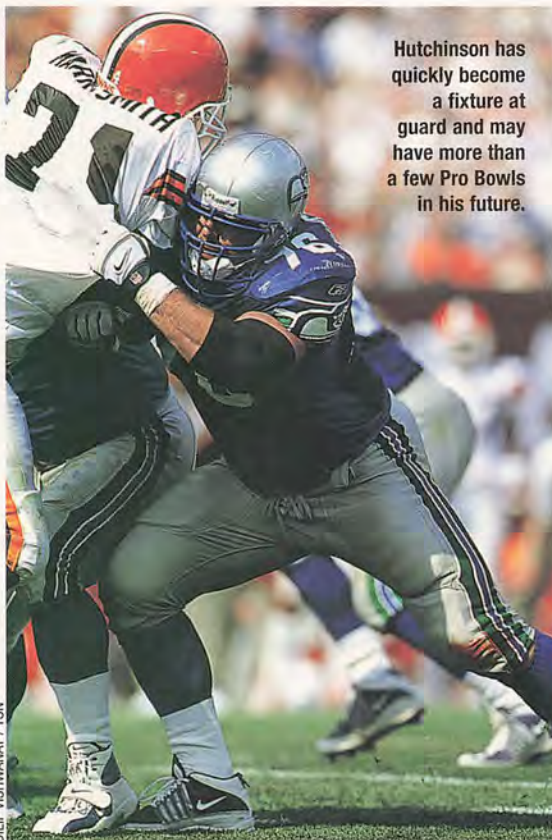
Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*298.3	15	25
Rushing offense	*121.0	5	9
Passing offense	*177.3	14	27
Scoring offense	301	12	19
Total defense	*325.4	10	20
Rushing defense	*107.6	8	15
Passing defense	*217.8	13	23
Scoring defense	324	10	18
Takeaways	27	10	21
Giveaways	21	T1	T2
Turnover differential	6	6	T11
Sacks	38	11	18
Sacks allowed	49	14	26

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Mike Holmgren	G.M./head coach	17	4
Tom Lovat	Asst. head coach/off. line	22	4
Gil Haskell	Offensive coordinator	20	3
Steve Sidwell	Defensive coordinator	21	3
Larry Brooks	Defensive line	16	4
Jerry Colquitt	Offensive quality control	12	4
Nolan Cromwell	Wide receivers	12	4
Ken Flajole	Defensive backs	5	4
Johnny Holland	Linebackers	8	3
Kent Johnston	Strength & conditioning	16	4
Bill Laveroni	Assistant offensive line	1	1
Jim Lind	Tight ends	11	4
Clayton Lopez	Def. quality control/DBs	4	4
Mark Michaels	Assistant special teams	2	2
Stump Mitchell	Running backs	4	4
Pete Rodriguez	Special teams	15	5
Rod Springer	Asst. strength & cond.	4	4
Jim Zorn	Quarterbacks	6	2



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

Hutchinson has quickly become a fixture at guard and may have more than a few Pro Bowls in his future.

unit. Linebacker Chad Brown will continue to step up and play right end in the nickel. Anton Palepoi was selected in the second round because of his relentlessness as a pass rusher and could man the left side on passing downs. Cochran or King could slide inside to replace Eaton. Both have been effective inside rushers in the past.

The Seahawks must try something to improve a pass rush that produced only 38 sacks last season. **GRADE: C+**

Linebackers—Since making a free-agent splash in 1997 by signing Brown, the Seahawks have been searching for complementary components. From 1997 to 2000, four different players started at middle linebacker, and three started at the outside spot opposite Brown. The revolving door has been slammed shut by Simmons, who has averaged 135 tackles the past two seasons on the weak side, and by the acquisition of Kirkland to fill the middle.

Kirkland had 101 tackles last year despite leaving the field on passing downs. His presence also allowed Brown and Simmons to be more active because they did not have to cheat inside to help barricade the middle of a defense that was so weak against the run in 2000.

The trick now for Sidwell is to devise more and better ways to utilize Brown and Simmons in the base and nickel packages. As good as they are while staying home, the two could make the defense more disruptive and less predictable if they were allowed to roam occasionally.

Marcus Bell and Tim Terry, the backups on the outside, didn't play much last season but were productive in their roles in the nickel. The coaches think special teams standout Isaiah Kacyvenski can be the eventual replacement for Kirkland. **GRADE: B+**

Secondary—In a perfect world, the Seahawks would play more press coverage and use Springs to take away the opponent's leading receiver. But things have been far from perfect in the team's secondary since Springs was the third overall pick in 1997. He has been bothered by hamstring problems the past two seasons. Last year, he missed 10 starts because of his left hamstring and the four-game suspension he served for using steroids to try to heal a right hamstring that was a problem in 2000.

The club also has used three high draft choices the past three years in an attempt to find a bigger corner to start opposite Springs: Ike Charlton, a second-round pick in 2000; Ken Lucas, a second-round pick in 2001; and Kris Richard, a third-round pick this year.

The team signed Doug Evans, who played for Holmgren in Green Bay, with the idea of using him and Willie Williams to cover the slot receivers in the nickel and dime, with Springs and Lucas manning the corners.

Starting safeties Reggie Tongue and Robertson were solid last year but must be even better—particularly in zone coverage—because they'll have to play more of it against the pass-happy Rams and 49ers in the NFC West. **GRADE: C+**

SPECIAL TEAMS

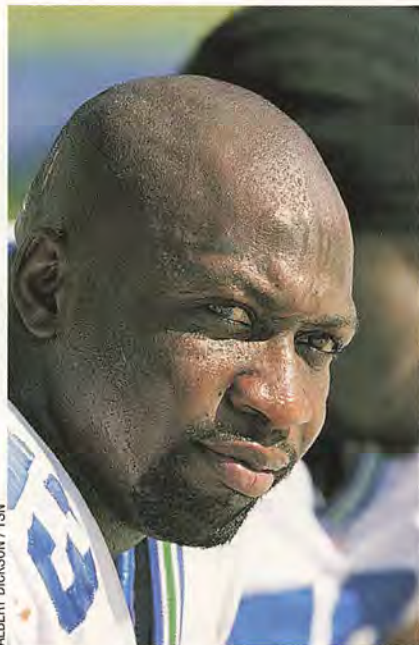
Where to begin? That's the question facing assistant coach Pete Rodriguez as he tries to return the special teams to the top-five ranking the unit enjoyed in his first three seasons with the Seahawks before slumping to 18th last year.

Rodriguez will have to make improvements without kick returner Charlie Rogers, who was lost in the expansion draft but ended up in Buffalo. Rogers' return averages dipped to 9.8 yards on punts and 22.4 yards on kickoffs last year, but he was a threat to score every time he touched the ball. Those chores now fall to Ingram, who averaged 16 yards on punt returns while subbing for Rogers last year, and James Williams, who has more speed than Rogers but is not as good of an open-field runner on kickoff returns.

Rodriguez likely will have to make due with Rian Lindell, who made 15 of 17 field-goal attempts as a rookie in 2000 but missed

REALIGNMENT reality

The Seahawks jump from the frying pan into the fire with their move from the AFC West to the NFC West, which includes the Rams, 49ers and Cardinals. Whether it will be a leap of faith or a fatal fall will be determined by the Seahawks' ability to stay healthy in the secondary and generate pressure on opposing quarterbacks. Last season, injuries to cornerbacks Shawn Springs and Willie Williams and free safety Marcus Robertson meant the Seahawks played only two games with their most experienced defensive backs on the field at the same time. Just as troublesome was the fact that they had only 38 sacks—with more than half coming from John Randle and Chad Brown, who comprise the right side of the line in the nickel. Seattle won't be able to keep up with the Rams and 49ers, who made the playoffs with strong passing games last season, unless both situations improve.



ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

Randle's 11 sacks last season showed that he still can rev up his celebrated motor.

12 attempts last year. The punting game is more solid, with CFL import Jean-Philippe Darche snapping to Jeff Feagles, who remains one of the best directional and placement punters in the league. With Feagles entering his 15th NFL season, the Seahawks drafted Craig Jarrett in the sixth round, just in case.

The coverage units also were erratic last season, a situation that could be helped by good health among the starters so Rodriguez has all the backups at his disposal. **GRADE: C**

BOTTOM LINE As Holmgren is fond of saying, a team's record is the bottom line. The Seahawks will be better this season. But with six games against premium teams (the Rams, 49ers, Eagles and Raiders), they might not be good enough to get to 10 wins for the first time since 1986—which is probably what it will take to get back to the playoffs in the NFC. **TSN**

Clare Farnsworth covers the Seahawks for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Koren Robinson
	□ James Williams
LT	● Walter Jones
	□ Dennis Norman
LG	● Steve Hutchinson
	■ Floyd Womack
C	■ Robbie Tobeck
	■ Chris Gray
RG	■ Chris Gray
	■ Floyd Womack
RT	■ Chris McIntosh
	■ Floyd Wedderburn
TE	■ Jerramy Stevens
	■ Itula Mili
WR	● Darrell Jackson
	■ Bobby Engram
QB	■ Trent Dillier
	□ Matt Hasselbeck
RB	● Shaun Alexander
	■ Maurice Morris
FB	■ Mack Strong
	□ Heath Evans

Defense

LE	■ Lamar King
	□ Anton Palepoi
LT	■ Chad Eaton
	□ Cedric Woodard
RT	● John Randle
	□ Rocky Bernard
RE	■ Antonio Cochran
	■ Brandon Mitchell
OLB	● Anthony Simmons
	■ Marcus Bell
MLB	■ Levon Kirkland
	□ Isaiah Kacyvenski
OLB	● Chad Brown
	□ Tim Terry
LCB	● Shawn Springs
	■ Doug Evans
RCB	■ Ken Lucas
	■ Willie Williams
SS	■ Reggie Tongue
	□ Terrelle Pryor
FS	■ Marcus Robertson
	□ Maurice Kelly

Specialists

K	□ Rian Lindell
P	■ Jeff Feagles
KR	□ James Williams
PR	■ Bobby Engram
LS	■ J.P. Darche
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

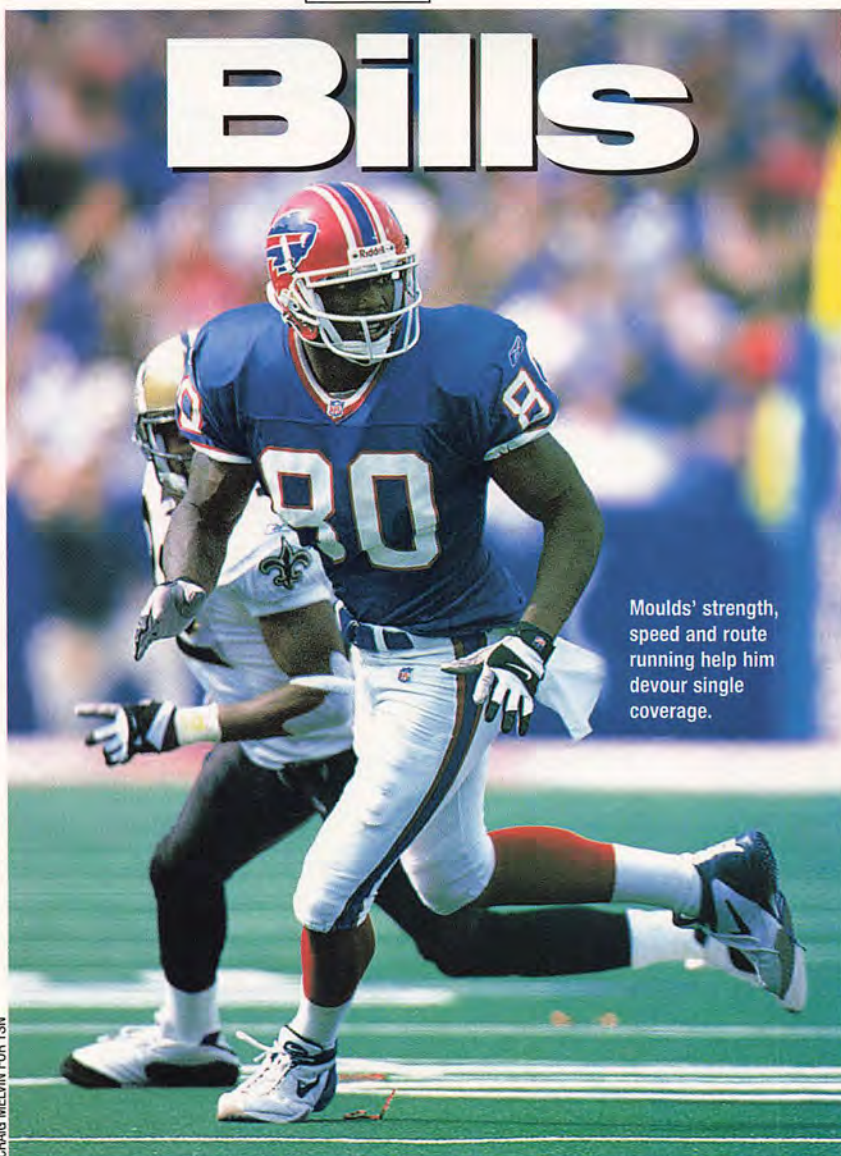
SEAHAWKS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
4	Dillier, Trent	6-4/229	3-13-72	9	Fresno State	UFA/01	7/4
8	Hasselbeck, Matt	6-4/233	9-25-75	4	Boston College	T-GB/01	13/12
17	Kelly, Jeff	6-1/210	9-7-79	R	Southern Mississippi	D7/02	—
	Leaf, Ryan	6-5/248	5-15-76	5	Washington State	FA/02	4/3
Running backs							
37	Alexander, Shaun	5-11/220	8-30-77	3	Alabama	D1a/00	16/12
44	Evans, Heath (FB)	6-0/249	12-30-78	2	Auburn	D3/01	16/0
35	Graham, Jay	6-0/224	7-14-75	6	Tennessee	FA/01	11/0
20	Morris, Maurice	5-11/208	12-1-79	R	Oregon	D2a/02	—
38	Strong, Mack (FB)	6-0/238	9-11-71	8	Georgia	FA/93	16/13
Receivers							
85	Bannister, Alex	6-5/201	4-23-79	2	Eastern Kentucky	D5/01	16/0
83	Bowles, Fabien	5-11/189	2-29-72	8	Western Illinois	W-Chi/99	16/0
52	Darche, J.P. (TE)	6-0/239	2-28-75	3	McGill (Canada)	FA/00	16/0
84	Engram, Bobby	5-10/185	1-7-73	7	Penn State	FA/01	16/4
48	Hannam, Ryan (TE)	6-2/251	2-24-80	R	Northern Iowa	D5b/02	—
82	Jackson, Darrell	6-0/199	12-6-78	3	Florida	D3/00	16/16
89	Mili, Itula (TE)	6-4/258	4-20-73	6	Brigham Young	D6/97	16/5
81	Robinson, Koren	6-1/213	3-19-80	2	North Carolina State	D1a/01	16/13
86	Stevens, Jerramy (TE)	6-7/265	11-13-79	R	Washington	D1/02	—
87	Stewart, Russell (TE)	6-4/250	9-25-77	2	Stanford	FA/01	1/0
88	Williams, James	5-10/188	3-6-78	3	Marshall	D6a/00	6/2
Offensive linemen							
62	Gray, Chris (G)	6-4/303	6-19-70	10	Auburn	UFA/98	16/16
74	Hill, Matt (T)	6-6/300	11-10-78	R	Boise State	D5c/02	—
76	Hutchinson, Steve (G)	6-5/311	11-1-77	2	Michigan	D1b/01	16/16
71	Jones, Walter (T)	6-5/307	1-19-74	6	Florida State	D1b/97	16/16
75	McIntosh, Chris (T)	6-6/314	2-20-77	3	Wisconsin	D1b/00	10/3
68	Norman, Dennis (T)	6-5/307	1-26-80	2	Princeton	D7b/01	0/0
61	Tobeck, Robbie (C)	6-4/298	3-6-70	9	Washington State	UFA/00	16/16
69	Wedderburn, Floyd (T)	6-5/333	5-5-76	4	Penn State	D5a/99	16/0
77	Womack, Floyd (T)	6-4/330	11-15-78	2	Mississippi State	D4c/01	6/0
Defensive linemen							
72	Bernard, Rocky (T)	6-3/294	4-19-79	R	Texas A&M	D5a/02	—
60	Brown, Joe (T)	6-6/288	3-5-77	2	Ohio State	FA/01	2/0
78	Cochran, Antonio (T)	6-4/290	6-21-76	4	Georgia	D4/99	16/2
90	Eaton, Chad (T)	6-5/306	4-6-72	7	Washington State	UFA/01	16/16
95	Hilliard, John (E)	6-2/294	4-16-76	3	Mississippi State	D6c/00	16/7
92	King, Lamar (E)	6-3/295	8-10-75	4	Saginaw Valley St.	D1/99	9/9
97	Mitchell, Brandon (E)	6-3/280	6-19-75	6	Texas A&M	UFA/02	16/11
91	Palepoi, Anton (E)	6-3/279	1-19-78	R	UNLV	D2b/02	—
93	Randle, John (T)	6-1/287	12-12-67	13	Texas A&I	FA/01	15/14
98	Woodard, Cedric (T)	6-2/311	9-5-77	3	Texas	W-Bal/00	16/0
Linebackers							
55	Bell, Marcus	6-1/240	7-19-77	3	Arizona	D4a/00	13/0
94	Brown, Chad	6-2/240	7-12-70	10	Colorado	UFA/97	16/16
57	Huff, Orlando	6-2/246	8-14-78	2	Fresno State	D4a/01	12/0
58	Kacyvenski, Isaiah	6-1/250	10-3-77	3	Harvard	D4b/00	16/0
99	Kirkland, Levon	6-1/275	2-16-69	11	Clemson	FA/01	16/16
51	Simmons, Anthony	6-0/236	6-20-76	5	Clemson	D1/98	16/16
59	Terry, Tim	6-2/243	7-26-74	4	Temple	FA/00	16/0
Defensive backs							
45	Bierria, Terrelle (S)	6-3/216	10-10-80	R	Georgia	D4/02	—
28	Blackmon, Harold (CB)	5-11/208	5-20-78	2	Northwestern	D7a/01	2/0
23	Charlton, Ike (CB)	5-11/204	10-6-77	3	Virginia Tech	D2/00	15/1
33	Evans, Doug (CB)	6-1/190	5-13-70	10	Louisiana Tech	FA/02	16/16
29	Fuller, Curtis (S)	5-10/180	7-25-78	2	Texas Christian	D4b/01	10/1
26	Kelly, Maurice (S)	6-2/209	10-9-72	3	East Tennessee State	FA/00	8/3
21	Lucas, Ken (CB)	6-0/203	1-23-79	2	Mississippi	D2/01	16/8
22	Miranda, Paul (CB)	5-10/178	5-2-76	4	Central Florida	FA/00	8/2
41	Richard, Kris (CB)	5-11/186	10-28-78	R	Southern California	D3/02	—
32	Robertson, Marcus (S)	5-11/211	10-2-69	12	Iowa State	FA/01	12/12
24	Springs, Shawn (CB)	6-0/196	3-11-75	6	Ohio State	D1a/97	8/7
25	Tongue, Reggie (S)	6-0/203	4-11-73	7	Oregon State	UFA/00	16/16
27	Williams, Willie (CB)	5-9/181	12-26-70	10	Western Carolina	UFA/97	14/14
Specialists							
10	Feagles, Jeff (P)	6-1/207	3-7-66	15	Miami (Fla.)	UFA/98	16/0
11	Jarrett, Craig (P)	6-2/215	7-17-79	R	Michigan State	D6/02	—
9	Lindell, Rian (K)	6-3/226	1-20-77	3	Washington State	FA/00	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: WR Shockmain Davis, DE Reggie Grimes, WR Damon Hodge, WR Isaac Jones, CB Ramos McDonald, LB Keith Miller, TE Ryan Neufeld, C/G Situpu Peko. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Bills



Moulds' strength, speed and route running help him devour single coverage.

CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

BY ALLEN WILSON

The Bills should send Rob Johnson a thank-you note. By refusing to rework his contract, he did for the Bills what he couldn't do on the field—make them a better team.

His release created the salary-cap space that allowed the Bills to be far more active in the free-agent market than anticipated.

They acquired three defensive starters in middle linebacker London Fletcher, outside linebacker Eddie Robinson and strong safety Billy Jenkins. They added solid offensive line depth in Trey Teague and Marcus Price, a proven kicker in Mike Hollis and a tight end in Dave Moore, who could compete for a starting job. A trade brought talented kick-return specialist Charlie Rogers.

The draft netted some prizes such as stud offensive tackle Mike Williams in the first round and potential impact wide receiver Josh Reed in the second.

But the biggest move was the draft-day

trade with New England that brought quarterback Drew Bledsoe to Buffalo for a first-round pick in 2003. Bledsoe may be the most significant acquisition since the arrival of Jim Kelly in 1986.

Not only will the Bills improve on their woeful 3-13 season, they could challenge for a playoff spot if everything falls right.

"The things we have done made us a much better football team," says coach Gregg Williams. "It's a significant difference from when I came here last season, let alone from the end of this past season. There is still a lot to be done, but our rebuilding efforts have taken a big step forward."

COACHING Strategies—

Williams believes he has the pieces in place to have a balanced offense that emphasizes the run and an attacking defense that creates big plays.

The Bills ranked 13th in offense last year, but were only 27th in points scored and produced just 18 touchdowns on 39 possessions

inside the opponents' 20-yard line. That's why Kevin Gilbride was hired to replace Mike Sheppard as offensive coordinator. Gilbride has coordinated productive offenses, especially while with the Oilers and Jaguars, and the team expects significant improvement.

Departing along with Sheppard is the West Coast offense that flopped last year. Gilbride's plan is to implement a physical running game and a vertical passing attack. That doesn't necessarily mean 30 runs and 30 passes per game, but the offense must be diverse and flexible enough to keep defenses off-balance.

"In other words," Gilbride says, "if they're ganging up on your running game because that's what they feel you're very good at, are you good enough to take advantage by throwing the ball?"

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	N.Y. JETS	1:00	Nov. 10	Open date	
Sept. 15	at Minnesota	4:15	Nov. 17	at Kansas City	1:00
Sept. 22	at Denver	4:05	Nov. 24	at N.Y. Jets	1:00
Sept. 29	CHICAGO	1:00	Dec. 1	MIAMI	1:00
Oct. 6	OAKLAND	1:00	Dec. 8	at New Eng.	1:00
Oct. 13	at Houston	1:00	Dec. 15	SAN DIEGO	1:00
Oct. 20	at Miami	1:00	Dec. 22	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 27	DETROIT	1:00	Dec. 29	CINCINNATI	1:00
Nov. 3	NEW ENGLAND	1:00	Strength of schedule: T 1st		

Despite last year's struggles on defense, Williams sees second-year coordinator Jerry Gray as a rising star. Injuries and inexperience prevented the Bills from putting a productive unit on the field every week. Only Indianapolis and Detroit allowed more points than the Bills.

But an infusion of talent through the free-agent market and the draft gives Gray an opportunity to implement the aggressive scheme Williams prefers. The Bills will look to pressure offenses on every snap with the objective of creating havoc and turnovers.

Style—Williams turned some players off early on with his drill sergeant approach. But with a younger team than predecessors Marv Levy and Wade Phillips, Williams sent a message that the laid-back atmosphere of past regimes was history.

He brought more intensity and toughness to a team that had lacked it at times. The approach didn't result in many wins because the team didn't have enough talent. But the team showed signs of improvement at the end of the season.

Gilbride is another strong personality with a reputation of being a no-nonsense disciplinarian. Gray isn't very vocal, but he's a forceful guy who can motivate players. A former All-Pro defensive back, he brings the credibility and experience of one who has played the game and knows how it should be played.

Perhaps no assistant will be under more scrutiny than offensive line coach Ronnie Vinkelarek. He communicates well, which is

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

I'm sure the offense, under **Kevin Gilbride**, will be structured to fit **Drew Bledsoe's** strengths. It will be an offense he should thrive in—more of a downfield passing game. They've just got to protect him. ... They shored up their offensive line, which was very weak last year. **Mike Williams**, their top draft pick, will start and should help them, whether he plays right or left tackle. They signed **Trey Teague**, and he should help them with depth. **Jonas Jennings** is a solid young tackle. **Ruben Brown** is on the down side and **Bill Conaty** is average. But they've got enough depth there that they should be better than last year. ... They improved themselves bringing in **London Fletcher**. He'll make them a faster defense. ... They've got two



THE BILLS

young corners who are solid and on the rise in **Nate Clements** and **Antoine Winfield**. They also have **Chris Watson**. But they don't have any depth after that. ... Their receivers will be very good. They've got (**Eric Moulds** and **Peerless (Price)**), they drafted **Josh Reed** and then they've got a solid fourth with **Reggie Germany** or **Jeremy McDaniel**. ... In **Travis Henry** and **Shawn Bryson**, they've got two solid running backs. They aren't stars, but they are guys who can get yards. ... I thought this team was on the rise last year. They had a lot of young guys who kind of got thrown in the fire, and they got better. The big question is: Can they keep doing that? A lot of times, in the second year with a new coach you don't have quite the energy.

good because his job is to quickly develop rookie Mike Williams and second-year pro Jonas Jennings.

Defensive line coach John Levrá's ability to teach technique helped tackle Pat Williams, a former undrafted long shot, become a standout and end Aaron Schobel make an impact as a rookie. Levrá's big challenge in 2002 is getting more production out of several promising young interior linemen. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Once it was clear Johnson would not be the quarterback of the present or future, president/G.M. Tom Donahoe began searching for a replacement. After weeks of negotiations, Donahoe finally made the deal to get

Bledsoe. Although it cost the Bills their top draft pick next season, the deal could turn out to be one of the best in franchise history.

Bledsoe is a classic pocket passer who offers some exciting possibilities for a new scheme. His ability to throw deep ranks with the best in the league, and he has the accuracy and touch to put the ball in tight spots. With Bledsoe under center, the Bills should be able to stretch defenses.

There is concern about Bledsoe's mobility, especially in an era when defenses constantly blitz and flush quarterbacks from the pocket. He was sacked a total of 100 times in 1999 and 2000, his final two complete seasons as the starter in New England. He also went 7-19 in his last 26 starts.

But unlike Johnson, Bledsoe has a presence in the pocket and leadership qualities the team needs at the most important position. Despite nine seasons of wear and tear, Bledsoe is only 30 and should be fresh coming off a season in which he played in only a few games.

Alex Van Pelt, who was listed as the starter until the Bledsoe trade, gives the team a solid backup who has appeared in 23 games, including 11 starts, during his six years in the NFL. Travis Brown and rookie free agent David Priestley will battle for the No. 3 spot. Brown showed some promise last year, but Priestley has some talent the team may want to nurture. **GRADE: B**

Running backs—The NFL's 22nd-ranked rushing game was in need of an overhaul. The names will be the same, but the philosophy has changed. The Bills will try to pound defenses in the middle and attack the perimeter with speed. The Bills want Travis Henry or Shawn Bryson to be the feature back.

Henry was having a productive rookie season before a knee injury sidelined him the last three games. The 5-9, 220-pounder doesn't have great speed, but he has a quick burst through the hole. He is a physical,

between-the-tackles runner with great vision. His strong legs and low center of gravity make him difficult to bring down. However, he needs to improve his receiving skills.

Bryson showed big-time potential after Henry was hurt, rushing for 130 and 107 yards in back-to-back games. Bryson (6-1, 228) has good size and is one of the team's fastest players. His explosive speed was evident on power sweeps last season. Bryson isn't very elusive but can make tacklers miss, and the Bills want to take advantage of his speed more as a receiver by matching him up against slower linebackers and defensive backs. Sammy Morris must fight for playing time, but his versatility and work on special teams should earn him a roster spot.

Although venerable fullback Larry Centers was a better fit in the team's former West Coast scheme—he had 80 receptions last season—he still should have a significant role. He has great hands and a remarkable knack for getting separation. He's also a willing blocker and was a better ballcarrier than anticipated, averaging 4.7 yards per carry.

Phillip Crosby and seventh-round pick Jarrett Ferguson will compete for the backup

2001 results

Sept. 9	NEW ORLEANS	L	6-24
Sept. 23	at Indianapolis	L	26-42
Sept. 30	PITTSBURGH	L	3-20
Oct. 7	N.Y. JETS	L	36-42
Oct. 14	Open date		
Oct. 18	at Jacksonville	W	13-10
Oct. 28	at San Diego	L	24-27
Nov. 4	INDIANAPOLIS	L	14-30
Nov. 11	at New England	L	11-21
Nov. 18	SEATTLE	L	20-23
Nov. 25	MIAMI	L	27-34
Dec. 2	at San Fran.	L	0-35
Dec. 9	CAROLINA	W	25-24
Dec. 16	NEW ENG. (OT)	L	9-12
Dec. 23	at Atlanta	L	30-33
Dec. 30	at N.Y. Jets	W	14-9
Jan. 6	at Miami	L	7-34

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Look for Drew Bledsoe to have a big season. He is determined to prove to the Patriots and coach Bill Belichick, that they kept the wrong quarterback.
2. WR Eric Moulds will return to the Pro Bowl. Coordinator Kevin Gilbride wants to get the ball to Moulds more. And, he always seems to go to the Pro Bowl after even-number years ('98 and '00).
3. MLB London Fletcher will have a very good season. He isn't Sam Cowart, but this defense is tailor-made for his skills.
4. Travis Henry will become the No. 1 back. Henry simply is the better runner. However, Shawn Bryson should stay ready because Henry's physical style makes him susceptible to injury.
5. This will be Peerless Price's final year with the Bills. Price likes playing with Moulds but feels he could be the primary receiver elsewhere. With a big year, Price could cash in as a free agent.



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Winfield is a technically sound corner who is a fierce tackler.

fullback job. Both are good lead blockers.
GRADE: C

Receivers—With Bledsoe delivering the ball, Eric Moulds and Peerless Price could become one of the most feared tandem of receivers in the league. Moulds can be dominant at times but wasn't up to his normal level last year. Double coverage and inconsistent quarterbacking limited him to 67 catches, 904 yards and five touchdowns. Moulds eats up single coverage, using his strength, speed and route running to get separation from defenders.

Look for Moulds to post better numbers this year, especially if Price continues his steady improvement and draws more attention from defenses. Price is coming off his best year with 55 catches for 895 yards and seven touchdowns. He isn't as physically impressive as Moulds, but secondaries must respect his game-breaking speed. There is extra motivation for Price because his contract expires after the season.

The Bills were thrilled to find Reed available in the second round. He was one of the most productive players in college football last fall with 94 catches and more than 1,700 yards. Reed (5-10, 203) is built like a tailback and runs like one after the catch. He figures to be the team's No. 3 receiver.

Jeremy McDaniel and Reggie Germany

will fight it out for the fourth spot. McDaniel has more experience, but Germany made great strides as a rookie.

Jay Riemersma returns at tight end, but Moore was signed to compete for the starting job. One of the league's best receivers at his position, Riemersma is coming off his most productive season with 53 catches and 590 yards. Moore is a better blocker and well suited for the team's new power running game. Sheldon Jackson is a strong blocker with decent receiving skills.

GRADE: B

Line—The draft and the free-agent market allowed the Bills to improve a position that has been a weakness for some

time. This unit should be much tougher and more physical. One reason is the addition of first-round pick Williams, a 6-6, 370-pound road grader. Williams is physically dominant at the point of attack and blessed with quick feet, long arms and strong hands.

Williams, Ruben Brown, Jerry Ostroski, Teague and Jonas Jennings are the five best linemen. But will all of them be on the field

at the same time? They are a versatile bunch, so it's possible.

Though left tackle is Williams' future spot, he is expected to open at right tackle, where he spent most of his college career. Jennings played well at right tackle as a rookie last year, but the team feels he can be a dominant center. He also has experience at left tackle. Teague played left tackle for Denver last year and is the leading candidate to open the season at that spot, but he also could move to guard or center. The team would like to use Ostroski, who has spent at least one season each as a starter at right tackle, guard and center, at right guard.

Left guard is set with Brown, who played in a sixth straight Pro Bowl after last season. He is an overpowering run blocker with the nimble feet to get in front of runners on sweeps. His long arms allow him to control pass rushers.

Center Bill Conaty, who started 16 games last year despite an injured shoulder that required surgery in the offseason, could end up as a backup. With his size and power, Jennings would provide an upgrade at center over Conaty.

Marques Sullivan filled in at both tackle spots last year. Tackles Jon Carman, Kris Farris and Price and guards Corey Hulseby and Mike Pucillo provide depth. **GRADE: C+**

DEFENSE Line—Tackle Pat Williams emerged as a disruptive force last season. His first year as a starter was worthy of Pro Bowl consideration as he made 74 tackles despite missing three games. He is strong, quick and agile, with an uncanny knack for penetrating gaps and making plays in the backfield.

Finding someone to play next to Williams is key because he encountered plenty of double teams last year. Veteran Shawn Price might not be the answer after undergoing offseason knee surgery, and Leif Larsen has not distinguished himself in three seasons. The team hopes Ron Edwards and Tyrone Robertson are ready to step in. Both showed

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-4	Mike Williams	OT	Texas	Brings a tough, physical style to an offensive line that needs it.
2-36	Josh Reed	WR	Louisiana State	Has great hands, runs crisp routes and is dynamic after the catch.
2-61	Ryan Denney	DE	Brigham Young	His relentless attitude reminds some of retired DE Phil Hansen.
3-97	Coy Wire	DB	Stanford	Bills hope college LB can make seamless shift to NFL safety.
5-139	Justin Bannan	DT	Colorado	Another big body for a run defense that was way too porous in '01.
6-176	Kevin Thomas	CB	UNLV	His ability to make plays will earn him shot at No. 4 CB job.
7-215	Mike Pucillo	G	Auburn	An outstanding drive blocker who also can play center.
7-249	Rodney Wright	WR	Fresno State	David Carr's go-to receiver faces uphill climb to make this roster.
7-251	Jarrett Ferguson	FB	Virginia Tech	A bruising runner known more for his exceptional blocking ability.
7-261	Dominique Stevenson	LB	Tennessee	Quick, active player who should contend for backup spot.

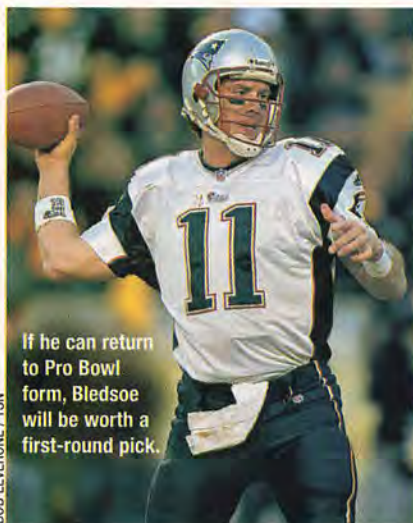
Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-23	Antowain Smith	RB	Houston	Starter with Patriots
'98	None			
'99-23	Antoine Winfield	CB	Ohio State	Starter with Bills
'00-26	Erik Flowers	DE	Arizona State	Starter with Bills
'01-21	Nate Clements	CB	Ohio State	Starter with Bills

promise in limited action as rookies. Fifth-round pick Justin Bannan, a high-effort 300-pounder, could help on first and second downs.

The Bills produced only 34 sacks last year, 24 by linemen. Schobel, the best of the ends with 6½ sacks as a rookie last year, will start at right end. He is quick off the ball and has developed countermeasures to evade blockers. He improved against the run as the year progressed.

Erik Flowers, a 2000 first-round pick, has been a huge disappointment but could get a shot at starting at left end. He has athletic ability but needs to improve his ability to



If he can return to Pro Bowl form, Bledsoe will be worth a first-round pick.

shed blocks and become sturdier against the run. The same applies to Bryce Fisher, another undersized end. Kendrick Office, an undrafted rookie in 2001, outplayed Flowers and Fisher late in the year and also figures in the mix.

The team expects second-round pick Ryan Denney to eventually fill the void created by the retirement of left end Phil Hansen. Denney has enough size (6-7, 276), quickness and athleticism to be a factor in the pass rush at end or tackle. He should compete for the starting job once he gets stronger against the run. **GRADE: C**

Linebackers—After Sam Cowart suffered a season-ending Achilles' injury in the opening game, the run defense was vulnerable. The effort to re-sign Cowart was unsuccessful, but luring Fletcher from St. Louis should make up for it. Fletcher is short and occasionally gets engulfed by offensive linemen, but he has exceptional speed and makes plays sideline-to-sideline. He also plays with great intensity and instincts and should be a force in an attacking defense.

Robinson, 32, who played in Williams' system in Tennessee, brings experience, leadership and big-play ability to the weak side. Strongside linebacker Keith Newman is on the rise. He is very tough and physical against the run, using his quickness and strength to ward off blockers. Fletcher's

arrival allows Gray to use Newman more as a pass rusher.

Brandon Spoon should benefit from playing behind Fletcher and get time in short-yardage situations because he has a nose for the ball. DaShon Polk and Fred Jones provide depth at outside linebacker. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—Former Ohio State teammates Antoine Winfield and Nate Clements give the Bills a pair of talented young cornerbacks who could be standouts for a long time. Their ability to lock up receivers in man coverage will allow Gray to deploy more blitzing.

Winfield is only 5-9, 180, but he's technically sound and a fierce tackler. Clements (5-11, 204) has good size for a corner, hits like a linebacker and has the speed to run with the quickest wideouts.

Chris Watson has developed into a solid No. 3 corner. Because of Watson's size (6-1, 188) and ball skills, Gray can slide Winfield inside to cover slot receivers in the team's nickel and dime packages. Sixth-round pick Kevin Thomas has a chance to land the No. 4 corner spot.

The Bills like to use the strong safety near the line of scrimmage like a linebacker. That should suit Jenkins, who loves to hit and packs a wallop for player his size (5-10, 205). However, his lack of height can hurt him as a pass defender, and his coverage skills are no more than average.

Free safety is a question mark. The team released two-year starter Keion Carpenter, leaving Travares Tillman as the top candidate. Tillman has good size and range and is a big hitter. But the Bills need him to be more consistent.

The top reserve at both safety spots is Pierson Prioleau, who lacks size (5-11, 191) but is a solid tackler with a knack for making big plays. Tony Driver and third-round pick Coy Wire, who is making the transition from college linebacker, will provide depth.

GRADE: B

SPECIAL TEAMS

There is plenty of room for improvement. Part of the problem was solved with the acquisition of Hollis, who was one of the most reliable kickers in the league until stumbling last season with Jacksonville. He has a strong and accurate leg, but will he succeed in tough weather conditions late in the season?

Punter Brian Moorman got off to a great start but steadily lost distance and hang time as the season went on. His leg may have worn down after playing a full NFL Europe season before joining the Bills. He probably will have to compete for the job in camp.

Rogers is one the league's premier return specialists and represents a major improvement over the committee the Bills used to finish 27th in kickoff returns and 14th in punt returns. Rogers runs with balance and speed. He has the vision to spot running lanes and the decisiveness to hit holes before they close.

Seventh-round pick Rodney Wright has

Moves

Key additions

QB Drew Bledsoe
LB London Fletcher
K Mike Hollis
S Billy Jenkins
TE Dave Moore
OT Marcus Price
LB Eddie Robinson
KR Charlie Rogers
OT Trey Teague

Trade/Patriots
Free agent/Rams
Free agent/Jaguars
Free agent/Packers
Free agent/Buccaneers
Free agent/Saints
Free agent/Titans
Trade/Texans
Free agent/Broncos

Key losses

WR Avion Black
S Keion Carpenter
LB Sam Cowart
K Shayne Graham
DE Phil Hansen
SS Raion Hill
CB Ken Irvin
QB Rob Johnson

Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Falcons
Free agent/Jets
Free agent
Retired
Free agent
Free agent/Saints
Free agent/Buccaneers

Stadium/Media

Ralph Wilson Stadium (73,840, artificial).

Ticket information: 877-BB-TICKS.

Training site: St. John Fisher College, Rochester, N.Y.; 716-648-1800.

Radio: WGRF-FM (96.9; 97 ROCK).

Website: www.buffalobills.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 3-13 (5th in AFC East); 1-7 in division; 2-10 in conference; 1-3 vs. NFC; 1-7 at home; 2-6 on road; 1-9 on artificial turf; 2-4 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Gregg Williams' regular-season record: 3-13 in one season with Bills.

Williams' postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 38-42 (.475, ranks 19th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*321.1	7	13
Rushing offense	*105.4	12	22
Passing offense	*215.7	6	12
Scoring offense	265	15	27
Total defense	*330.8	11	21
Rushing defense	*133.3	13	26
Passing defense	*197.4	8	13
Scoring defense	420	15	29
Takeaways	19	16	30
Giveaways	33	T10	T19
Turnover differential	-14	16	29
Sacks	34	13	21
Sacks allowed	46	T12	T22

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Gregg Williams	Head coach	13	2
Kevin Gilbride	Offensive coordinator	13	1
Jerry Gray	Defensive coordinator	6	2
Danny Smith	Special teams coordinator	8	2
Miles Aldridge	Linebackers	2	2
Steve Fairchild	Running backs	2	2
Fred Graves	Wide receivers	2	2
Steve Jackson	Asst. DBs/3rd down spec.	2	2
Rusty Jones	Strength and conditioning	18	18
Tommy Kaiser	Offensive assistant	2	2
Steve Kragthorpe	Quarterbacks	2	2
Chuck Lester	Offensive assistant	19	16
John Levra	Defensive line	22	5
Dan Neal	Tight ends	14	2
Pat Thomas	Defensive backs	9	2
Ronnie Vinklerak	Offensive line	3	2

REALIGNMENT reality

The Bills have a greatly improved lineup, which they will need to compete in the strong AFC East. With Indianapolis gone to the AFC South, the Bills are the only AFC East team that didn't win 10 or more games last season and go to the playoffs. While the Bills are improved, the same probably is true of the Jets, Patriots and Dolphins. The Jets were one of three teams Buffalo defeated last season, and the Bills did play the eventual Super Bowl champs tough twice, including one loss in overtime. Will Drew Bledsoe get the Bills over that hump this year when playing against his former team? The Bills clearly won't miss Peyton Manning and the Colts, who have won five of the last six meetings. How tough is the Bills' schedule? They have nine games against 2001 postseason qualifiers, including non-division games against the Packers, Bears and Raiders.



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

Pat Williams, a former undrafted long shot, has developed into a standout defensive tackle.

an impressive background as a return man, and Reed's great running skills also could be used in the return game. Clements returned a punt for a touchdown last season and could help if Rogers struggles. **GRADE: C**

BOTTOM LINE

The offseason moves have Bills fans thinking playoffs. But while the team will be improved, a lot has to go right for it to make a run at the postseason.

The schedule, which is tied for the toughest in the league based on last year's records, will be a big hurdle. The Bills have nine games—including all six division contests—against teams that made the playoffs last season. Also looming are games at some of the most intimidating sites in the league: Green Bay, Kansas City, Denver and Minnesota. The defensive line situation also is a concern because the Bills will face eight of the NFL's top 12 rushers from 2001. And three of those rushers—Curtis Martin, Ricky Williams and Antowain Smith—are on the schedule twice.

It's asking a lot for the Bills to make a leap to a winning record, but the pieces are in place for significant improvement. **TSN**

Allen Wilson covers the Bills for the Buffalo News.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ● Eric Moulds
□ Reggie Germany

LT ■ Trey Teague
□ Marques Sullivan

LG ● Ruben Brown
□ Mike Pucillo

C ■ Jonas Jennings
■ Bill Conaty

RG ■ Jerry Ostrowski
□ Corey Hulse

RT ■ Mike Williams
□ Marcus Price

TE ■ Jay Riemersma
■ Dave Moore

WR ■ Peerless Price
■ Josh Reed

QB ■ Drew Bledsoe
■ Alex Van Pelt

RB ■ Travis Henry
■ Shawn Bryson

FB ■ Larry Centers
□ Phillip Crosby

Defense

LE □ Erik Flowers
□ Ryan Denney

LT □ Tyrone Robertson
□ Justin Bannan

RT ● Pat Williams
□ Ron Edwards

RE ■ Aaron Schobel
□ Bryce Fisher

LLB ■ Keith Newman
□ DaShon Polk

MLB ● London Fletcher
□ Brandon Spoon

RLB ■ Eddie Robinson
□ Fred Jones

LCB ● Antoine Winfield
■ Chris Watson

RCB ● Nate Clements
□ Kevin Thomas

SS ■ Billy Jenkins
■ Pierson Prioleau

FS ■ Travares Tillman
■ Pierson Prioleau

Specialists

K ■ Mike Hollis

P □ Brian Moorman

KR ● Charlie Rogers

PR ● Charlie Rogers

LS ■ Dave Moore

● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

BILLS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
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Quarterbacks

11	Bledsoe, Drew	6-5/240	2-14-72	10	Washington State	T-NE/02	2/2
5	Brown, Travis	6-3/212	7-17-77	1	Northern Arizona	FA/01	1/0
9	Priestley, David	6-3/217	7-11-79	R	Pittsburgh	FA/02	—
10	Van Pelt, Alex	6-1/218	5-1-70	7	Pittsburgh	FA/94	12/8

Running backs

38	Bryson, Shawn	6-1/228	11-30-76	3	Tennessee	D3/99	15/3
37	Centers, Larry (FB)	6-0/225	6-1-68	13	Stephen F. Austin	FA/01	16/13
41	Crosby, Phillip (FB)	6-0/242	11-5-76	2	Tennessee	FA/00	16/2
44	Ferguson, Jarrett (FB)	5-8/222	1-23-79	R	Virginia Tech	D7c/02	—
20	Henry, Travis	5-9/220	10-29-78	2	Tennessee	D2b/01	13/12
33	Morris, Sammy	6-0/225	3-23-77	3	Texas Tech	D5/00	16/1

Receivers

84	Germany, Reggie	6-1/180	3-19-78	2	Ohio State	D7a/01	16/1
88	Jackson, Sheldon (TE)	6-3/242	7-24-76	4	Nebraska	D7a/99	16/1
86	McDaniel, Jeremy	6-1/195	5-2-76	3	Arizona	FA/99	7/0
83	Moore, Dave (TE)	6-2/250	11-11-69	11	Pittsburgh	FA/02	16/16
80	Moulds, Eric	6-2/204	7-17-73	7	Mississippi State	D1/96	16/16
87	O'Leary, Dan (TE)	6-3/248	9-1-77	2	Notre Dame	D6a/01	8/0
81	Price, Peerless	5-11/190	10-27-76	4	Tennessee	D2/99	16/16
82	Reed, Josh	5-10/203	5-1-80	R	Louisiana State	D2a/02	—
85	Riemersma, Jay (TE)	6-5/252	5-17-73	7	Michigan	D7b/96	16/15
31	Rogers, Charlie (KR)	5-9/177	6-19-76	4	Georgia Tech	T-Hou/02	13/0
89	Wright, Rodney	5-9/180	11-18-79	R	Fresno State	D7b/02	—

Offensive linemen

79	Brown, Ruben (G)	6-3/304	2-13-72	8	Pittsburgh	D1/95	16/16
65	Carman, Jon (T)	6-7/329	1-14-76	2	Georgia Tech	FA/00	9/2
63	Conaty, Bill (C)	6-2/300	3-8-73	6	Virginia Tech	FA/97	16/16
72	Farris, Kris (T)	6-8/318	3-26-77	2	UCLA	FA/01	3/1
70	Fina, John (T)	6-5/300	3-11-69	11	Arizona	D1/92	13/12
71	Hulse, Corey (G)	6-4/329	7-26-77	2	Clemson	FA/00	16/12
75	Jennings, Jonas (G)	6-3/320	11-21-77	2	Georgia	D3b/01	12/12
60	Ostroski, Jerry (C)	6-3/323	7-12-70	9	Tulsa	FA/93	7/7
73	Price, Marcus (T)	6-4/314	3-3-72	5	Louisiana State	UFA/02	12/0
61	Pucillo, Mike (G)	6-4/316	7-14-79	R	Auburn	D7a/02	—
74	Sullivan, Marques (T)	6-5/320	2-2-78	2	Illinois	D5/01	10/2
67	Teague, Trey (T)	6-5/292	12-27-74	5	Tennessee	UFA/02	16/16
68	Williams, Mike (T)	6-6/370	1-11-80	R	Texas	D1/02	—

Defensive linemen

69	Bannan, Justin (T)	6-3/300	4-18-79	R	Colorado	D5/02	—
90	Denney, Ryan (E)	6-7/276	6-15-77	R	Brigham Young	D2b/02	—
98	Edwards, Ron (T)	6-3/305	7-12-79	2	Texas A&M	D3a/01	7/3
95	Fisher, Bryce (E)	6-3/268	5-12-77	2	Air Force	D7b/99	13/2
96	Flowers, Erik (E)	6-4/273	3-1-78	3	Arizona State	D1/00	15/6
97	Larsen, Leif (T)	6-4/300	4-3-75	3	Texas-El Paso	D6/00	9/5
77	Office, Kendrick (E)	6-5/270	8-2-78	2	West Alabama	FA/01	7/1
91	Price, Shawn (E)	6-4/290	3-28-70	10	Pacific	FA/96	11/11
92	Robertson, Tyrone (T)	6-4/295	8-15-79	2	Georgia	D7b/01	12/0
94	Schobel, Aaron (E)	6-4/265	4-1-77	2	Texas Christian	D2a/01	16/11
93	Williams, Pat (T)	6-3/315	10-24-72	6	Texas A&M	FA/97	13/13

Linebackers

59	Fletcher, London	5-10/241	5-19-75	5	John Carroll	UFA/02	16/16
99	Jones, Fred	6-2/246	10-18-77	3	Colorado	FA/00	16/0
53	Newman, Keith	6-2/248	1-19-77	4	North Carolina	D4a/99	16/16
51	Polk, DaShon	6-2/240	3-13-77	3	Arizona	D7b/00	16/1
55	Robinson, Eddie	6-1/243	4-13-70	10	Alabama State	FA/02	16/16
58	Spoon, Brandon	6-2/242	7-5-78	2	North Carolina	D4/01	14/14
50	Stevenson, Dominique	6-0/231	12-28-77	R	Tennessee	D7d/02	—

Defensive backs

22	Clements, Nate (CB)	5-11/204	12-12-79	2	Ohio State	D1/01	16/11
25	Driver, Tony (S)	6-1/207	8-4-77	2	Notre Dame	D6/01	5/0
24	Jenkins, Billy (S)	5-10/211	7-8-74	6	Howard	UFA/02	12/0
23	Prioleau, Pierson (S)	5-11/190	8-6-77	4	Virginia Tech	FA/01	6/2
30	Thomas, Kevin (CB)	5-11/180	7-28-78	R	UNLV	D6/02	—
28	Tillman, Travares (S)	6-1/194	10-8-77	3	Georgia Tech	D2/00	13/6
21	Watson, Chris (CB)	6-1/188	6-30-77	4	Eastern Illinois	T-Den/00	14/0
26	Winfield, Antoine (CB)	5-9/180	6-24-77	4	Ohio State	D1/99	16/16
27	Wire, Coy (S)	6-0/209	11-7-78	R	Stanford	D3/02	—

Specialists

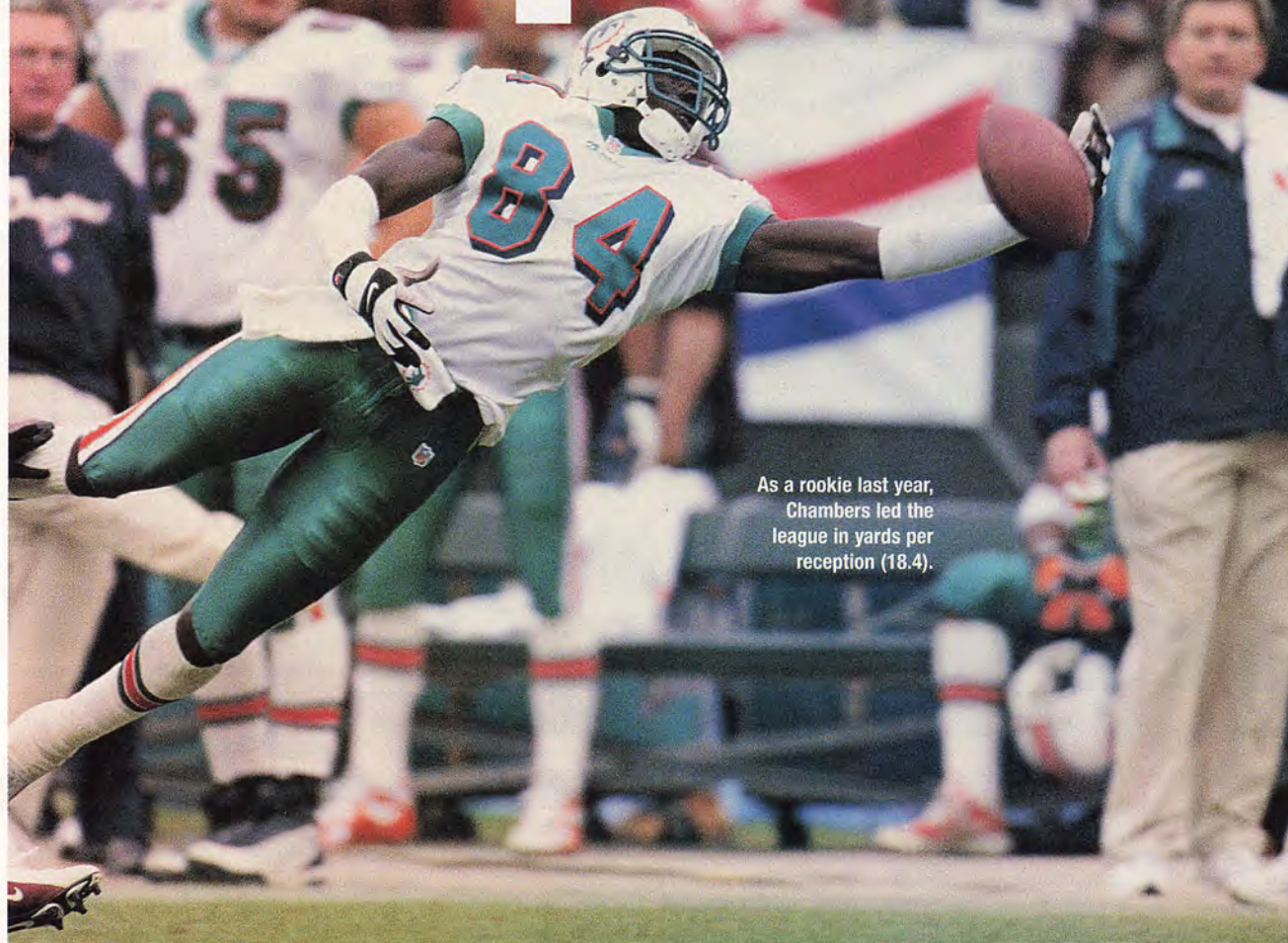
1	Hollis, Mike (K)	5-7/178	5-22-72	7	Idaho	UFA/02	16/0
8	Moorman, Brian (P)	6-0/180	2-8-76	2	Pittsburgh	FA/01	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: RB Curtis Alexander, CB Jason Bostic, DE James Cotton, C Tom Schau.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Dolphins



As a rookie last year, Chambers led the league in yards per reception (18.4).

DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

BY TODD ARCHER

The Dolphins became tired of just being close. So they traded for running back Ricky Williams, a deal they hope moves them from close to over the top. Since Williams arrived in South Florida, the Dolphins have been mentioned as bona fide Super Bowl contenders.

It's not a role they are running away from. "Well, there's a lot of factors with taking the next step, and I think that's what we're talking about here," says coach Dave Wannstedt, who traded three draft choices, including a 2002 first-rounder, to New Orleans for Williams. "Who would we have drafted in the first round? You don't know. Add Ricky Williams to this football team, and are we a better team right now? There's no question about that."

Williams makes the defense better because it shouldn't be on the field as much over the course of the season. He makes quarterback Jay Fiedler better because he won't be in so many third-and-long situations trying to make the impossible possible.

He makes the wide receivers better because defenses have to pay attention to play-action.

Coming to a team that has won 22 games the last two years, Williams is comfortable because he doesn't need to be the savior.

"I think the biggest thing for me is I'm coming to situation where they already have a good team," Williams said. "I'm going to be surrounded by good talent. I don't have to feel like it's my job to win games. I just have to do my part to win."

COACHING Strategies—If there is one change Wannstedt has made from his time in Chicago, it's in the way he works with his coordinators. Though he has not taken a completely hands-off approach, he will allow Norv Turner, one of the league's best play-callers, to handle the offense. Wannstedt is more involved with the defense, but he allows coordinator Jim Bates freedom, too.

Turner is implementing an offense that should use the talents of the entire roster. In

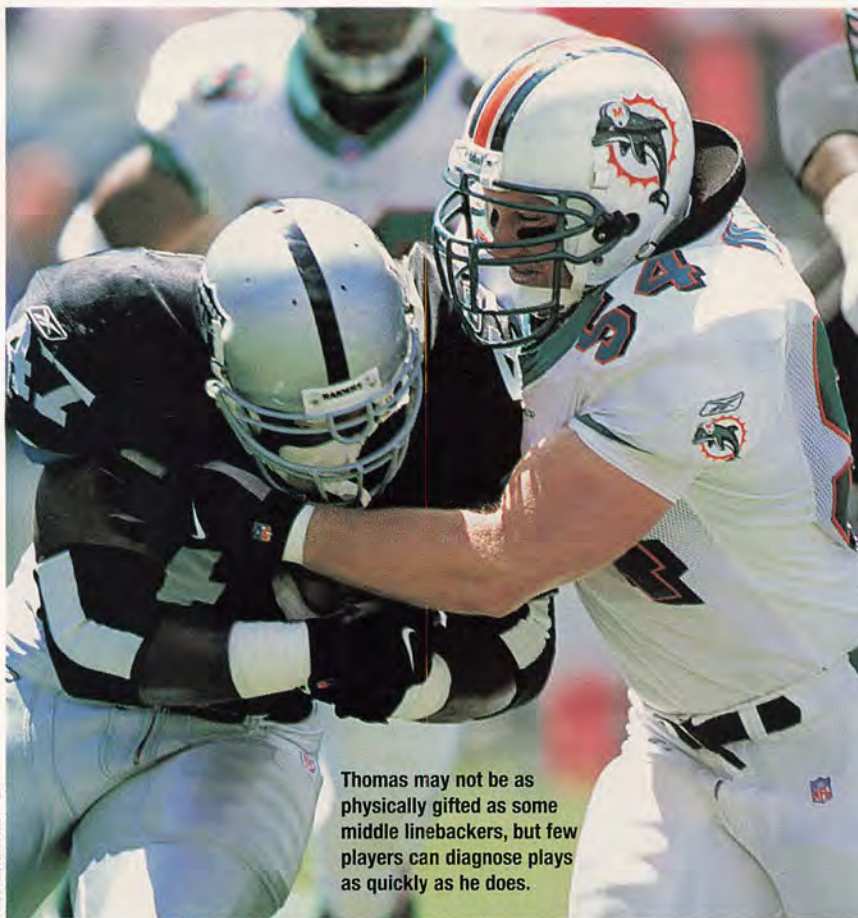
2002 schedule

All times Eastern			
Sept. 8	DETROIT	1:00	Nov. 10 at N.Y. Jets 8:30
Sept. 15	at Indianapolis	1:00	Nov. 17 BALTIMORE 1:00
Sept. 22	N.Y. JETS	1:00	Nov. 24 SAN DIEGO 1:00
Sept. 29	at Kansas City	1:00	Dec. 1 at Buffalo 1:00
Oct. 6	NEW ENGLAND	1:00	Dec. 9 CHI. (Mon.) 9:00
Oct. 13	at Denver	8:30	Dec. 15 OAKLAND 1:00
Oct. 20	BUFFALO	1:00	Dec. 21 at Min. (Sat.) 1:30
Oct. 27	Open date		Dec. 29 at New England 1:00
Nov. 4	at G.B. (Mon.)	9:00	

Strength of schedule: T 19th

the previous two years, the fullback and tight end spots often were ignored, leading to predictability. Turner also will have more talent to work with than his predecessor, Chan Gailey, especially at tailback. Turner has a history of getting good results from the running back position, having worked with Emmitt Smith, Terry Allen, Stephen Davis and LaDainian Tomlinson. Turner should get at least 1,300 yards from Williams, and the wide receivers also should see their averages increase because of Turner's timing-based routes.

Bates is contemplating a number of switches on defense. To help the run



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Thomas may not be as physically gifted as some middle linebackers, but few players can diagnose plays as quickly as he does.

defense, he might bring a safety closer to the line at times, which also would mean his talented cornerbacks would not be in press coverage 100 percent of the time. Though he does not like to blitz much, look for more of it this year.

Style—This is a very big year for Wannstedt. Though the Dolphins were 11-5 in each of his first two years, they won just one playoff game. Routines can become stale, but Wannstedt knows how to change things up and has a good read on where his team is mentally and physically during a season. He keeps an open line of communication with a number of players and does not get enough credit for letting his assistants coach.

Turner is not as laid-back as he appears to be. He has a fire in him that rubs off on his players. Bates' enthusiasm carries him a long way, too, and his players like to play for him.

Quarterbacks coach Mike Shula was criticized in Tampa Bay when he was the Buccaneers' offensive coordinator, but he has proved to be a good teacher, helping Fiedler become a solid starter. **GRADE: B+**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—The Dolphins committed to Fiedler with a five-year contract this offseason. After winning 21 games in 31 starts, he deserved the commitment.

Fiedler has had to handle the twin tasks

of replacing Dan Marino and hearing constant chatter about potential replacements such as Troy Aikman. Fiedler is what he is. He has come to realize when he has to take a chance—and when he can't. His touch-down-to-interception ratio improved greatly in the second half of last season. The Dolphins want their quarterback to be a person who won't lose games, but Fiedler has proved he can make enough plays to win some.

Ray Lucas and Cade McNown are the backups. Lucas is a very good athlete who occasionally was used last year as a change-up, especially in short-yardage situations. Under Turner that's not as likely, but Lucas

is a very good backup who accepts his role. McNown remains a mystery because he came to Miami so late in last year's training camp. After washing out in Chicago, McNown needs to work on his mechanics, especially his footwork. **GRADE: B**

Running backs—Williams can be a coach's dream, the type of running back who can win close games in the fourth quarter by gaining tough yards. He is not a breakaway threat but pounds tacklers. Williams also is a receiving threat, though he might not see as much action on third down as he did in New Orleans.

Travis Minor can be a very good third-down back but might be pushed by Robert Edwards, who is attempting a comeback from a severe knee injury suffered in 1999. The former Patriot is not favoring his leg and appears quick out of his cuts. Minor, however, has improved his hands and can handle blitzing linebackers. If Williams goes down, the team could split the job between Minor and Edwards. That wouldn't be such a bad thing.

Fullback Rob Konrad was pleased when he found out Turner would be the new coordinator. Miscast in Gailey's system as a blocking back, Konrad is a much better fit now. His blocking has improved greatly, but he has physical gifts that could make him a Daryl Johnston-type threat. Konrad must remain healthy and come through when he gets his chance. If Konrad fits the scheme, Deon Dyer's playing time could be reduced. But Dyer, a true blocking back, will be effective in short-yardage and goal-line situations. **GRADE: B+**

Receivers—As a rookie last season in a run-oriented offense, Chris Chambers caught 48 passes for 883 yards and seven touchdowns. The Dolphins still will emphasize the running game, but Chambers has the tools to become a true downfield threat under Turner. Chambers proved to have much better hands than anticipated, and he improved his route running as the season went on. He got by on a lot of natural ability last season. The year of experience should help him when he sees double-teams and rolled-up coverages.

Oronde Gadsden is coming off shoulder surgery that limited his offseason work, but

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
3-90	Seth McKinney	C	Texas A&M	Miami scouts liked the consistency he showed in 2001.
4-114	Randy McMichael	TE	Georgia	A good fit for the Dolphins' offense, but his blocking needs work.
5-161	Omare Lowe	DB	Washington	At the very least, he'll be an active player on special teams.
5-170	Sam Simmons	WR	Northwestern	Viewed more as a return man at this point than a WR prospect.
7-241	Leonard Henry	RB	East Carolina	Had good senior year, but where does he fit on this roster?

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-15	Yatil Green	WR	Miami (Fla.)	Out of football
'98-29	John Avery	RB	Mississippi	Out of football
'99	None			
'00	None			
'01-26	Jamar Fletcher	CB	Wisconsin	Backup with Dolphins

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

They had a one-player draft prior to the draft and that was **Ricky Williams**. He's a tough, inside runner who's going to break tackles and make you miss. And he's going to turn the ball over—that's the biggest negative about him. Williams is going to make this team better because two seasons ago, when they were running the ball, they were very unpredictable. ... To me, **Zach Thomas** is a product of the system. He plays with heart and soul. He does what he's supposed to do, but he doesn't make a lot of tackles in the open field. He's a good tackler in a tight space, but get him in the open field and he'll overrun the ball. I'm not saying the guy is bad, but if he made half the tackles he missed, he'd be even better than he is. ... The guy

OUTSIDE



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Gardener

VIEW

THE DOLPHINS

they're going to miss most in their secondary, I think, is **Terry Cousin**. He was a very productive player for them in their nickel package. He made plays on the blitz, on the run, in coverage. At the end of the season, he was probably their most productive player. ... Moving **Daryl Gardener** (from tackle to end) is probably a good move to salvage a good player. It gives them flexibility; on certain downs, you can move him back inside. But I think of him more as a power rusher, taking the tackle straight back and pretty much staying in the throwing lane. I think he'll have some problems with quick things out in space. ... They won't drop off much with **Mark Royals** replacing **Matt Turk** as the punter. Turk has an outstanding leg, but he struggles with consistency.

he is a very good intermediate receiver who can overpower smaller cornerbacks. He also is very productive in the clutch. James McKnight, who was brought in to stretch the field a year ago, wasn't given that opportunity too many times. He also had a couple of crucial drops, but he is a potential big-play receiver.

Dedric Ward's first year as a Dolphin was slowed by a stress fracture in his foot. When he did play, he and Fiedler showed good chemistry, especially on third downs. Working in the slot, Ward can be a dangerous receiver.

The biggest change will come at tight end. Turner likes to use the middle of the field in the passing game, so the new system will call

on the tight ends to do more than just block. Jed Weaver has the best hands among an untested group. Georgia's Randy McMichael was drafted in the fourth round with the hope he could develop into a target in the middle. He could be a nice fit in this system. **GRADE: B**

Line—This group was beset by injury and inconsistency last year.

The Dolphins tried to lure Olin Kreutz from the Bears to play center but came up short. Then they expended their first draft pick, a third-rounder, on Texas A&M center Seth McKinney. All of this should make Tim Ruddy worry about his future. A Pro Bowl center two years ago, Ruddy slumped in 2001 because he wasn't able to overcome a leg injury that robbed him of strength. After the team's offseason activities to improve the center position, Ruddy should be motivated to have a top-notch season.

Todd Perry, who had been a starting left guard in Chicago for six years, was signed a year ago to be Miami's right guard. But he struggled making the transition to the right side. Leon Searcy, who has not played in two years because of injury, was signed this offseason to compete with Perry and could land the job. In fact, Perry could be a cap casualty. Right tackle Todd Wade's second year was not as good as his rookie season, but he was nicked up and had to adjust to a new scheme. Another year should make Wade better.

The left side of the line is a question mark because of injuries. Left guard Mark Dixon is the team's best lineman when healthy, but health always is a question with him. He is coming off a fractured ankle that sidelined him for six games last year. Left tackle Brent Smith missed the entire 2001 season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee on the first day of training camp. He was replaced by Marcus Spriggs, who played in just one game before tearing his ACL. Nevertheless, if Dixon and Smith are

healthy, the line is good enough to get the job done. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSE Line—For the second straight year, the end position took a hit. In 2001,

pass-rusher extraordinaire Trace Armstrong left as a free agent. This year, Kenny Mixon and Lorenzo Bromell both signed with Minnesota.

All it does is put more pressure on right end Jason Taylor, already one of the best pass rushers in the game. Taylor is viewed incorrectly as a player who

has speed but little else. He uses leverage and strength more than people think. Though Jevon Kearse gets more publicity, Taylor is his equal in many areas. And as a run defender, Taylor is much superior.

Of course, Taylor will be helped greatly if Daryl Gardener makes a smooth transition from tackle to left end. After Gardener's second back surgery in as many years, the coaches want to reduce the risk of injury by playing him outside. It's sound in theory, but Gardener has to prove he has the quickness to play there. He is plenty strong and should give tight ends a fit, especially with as wide as the Dolphins' ends play.

Larry Chester was signed to take Gardener's spot inside on running downs. Chester does more than just hold up blockers. He can hold up running backs, too. With Tim Bowens next to him, the Dolphins will have two of the strongest tackles in the league. It's time for Bowens, who was double-teamed in Gardener's absence and not as effective, to put together a full season.

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Tennessee	W	31-23
Sept. 23	OAKLAND	W	18-15
Sept. 30	at St. Louis	L	10-42
Oct. 7	NEW ENGLAND	W	30-10
Oct. 14	at N.Y. Jets	L	17-21
Oct. 21	Open date		
Oct. 28	at Seattle	W	24-20
Nov. 4	CAROLINA	W	23-6
Nov. 11	at Indianapolis	W	27-24
Nov. 18	N.Y. JETS	L	0-24
Nov. 25	at Buffalo	W	34-27
Dec. 2	DENVER	W	21-10
Dec. 10	INDIANAPOLIS	W	41-6
Dec. 16	at San Francisco	L	0-21
Dec. 22	at New England	L	13-20
Dec. 30	ATLANTA	W	21-14
Jan. 6	BUFFALO	W	34-7
Jan. 13	BALTIMORE*	L	3-20

*AFC playoff game.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. RB Ricky Williams will end up costing Miami a second-round pick in 2003. For that to come true, he must run for 1,201-1,499 yards.
2. FB Rob Konrad and whoever plays tight end will have career highs in receptions. Norv Turner's offense allows the fullback and tight end to do more than just watch.
3. Chris Chambers will go to the Pro Bowl. The NFL's best rookie wide receiver of 2001 will become one of the best in the AFC this season.
4. The run defense, which broke down late in 2001, will improve greatly. A healthy Daryl Gardener at left end will help, as will some subtle changes in the scheme that will allow for an eighth man at the line of scrimmage at times.
5. Norv Turner's tenure will be brief. He will become a head coach again after taking an offense ranked 21st in '01 into the top 15 largely because of Williams' legs.



Konrad

Moves

Key additions

DT Larry Chester	Free agent/Panthers
RB Robert Edwards	Free agent
P Mark Royals	Free agent/Buccaneers
G Leon Searcy	Free agent/Ravens
RB Ricky Williams	Trade/Saints

Key losses

DE Lorenzo Bromell	Free agent/Vikings
CB Terry Cousin	Free agent/Panthers
OT Spencer Folau	Free agent/Saints
TE Hunter Goodwin	Free agent/Vikings
RB J.J. Johnson	Trade/Browns
WR O.J. McDuffie	Free agent
DE Kenny Mixon	Free agent/Vikings
RB Lamar Smith	Free agent/Panthers
OT Harry Swayne	Retired
P Matt Turk	Free agent/Jets
S Brian Walker	Free agent/Lions

Stadium/Media

Pro Player Stadium (75,192, grass).

Ticket information: 305-620-2578.

Training site: Nova Southeastern University, Davie, Fla.; 954-452-7000.

Radio: WOAM-AM (560).

Website: www.miamidolphins.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 11-5 (2nd in AFC East); 5-3 in division; 9-3 in conference; 2-2 vs. NFC; 7-1 at home; 4-4 on road; 3-1 on artificial turf; 8-4 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Lost to Baltimore, 20-3, in AFC wild-card game.

Dave Wannstedt's regular-season record: 22-10 in two seasons with Dolphins; 62-66 overall in eight seasons with Dolphins and Bears.

Wannstedt's postseason record: 1-2 in two appearances with Dolphins; 2-3 overall in three appearances with Dolphins and Bears.

Team record last five years: 50-30 (.625, ranks T3rd in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 1996.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*301.3	11	21
Rushing offense	*104.0	13	23
Passing offense	*197.3	9	19
Scoring offense	344	5	8
Total defense	*288.0	3	5
Rushing defense	*111.2	9	17
Passing defense	*176.8	1	1
Scoring defense	290	5	11
Takeaways	28	T6	T16
Giveaways	38	T15	T27
Turnover differential	-10	14	T26
Sacks	37	12	T19
Sacks allowed	27	T2	T5

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dave Wannstedt	Head coach	14	4
Norv Turner	Offensive coordinator	18	1
Jim Bates	Defensive coordinator	12	3
Keith Armstrong	Special teams	9	2
Doug Blevins	Kicking	6	6
Clarence Brooks	Defensive line	10	3
Joel Collier	Running backs	13	9
Robert Ford	Wide receivers	12	5
John Gamble	Strength & conditioning	9	9
Judd Garrett	Offensive assistant	6	3
Pat Jones	Tight ends	8	7
Bill Lewis	Defensive nickel package	7	7
Robert Nunn	Defensive assistant	3	3
Mel Phillips	Secondary	23	18
Brad Roll	Asst. strength & cond.	10	7
Bob Sanders	Linebackers	2	2
Mike Shula	Quarterbacks	15	5
Tony Wise	Offensive line	14	2



PETER NEWCOMB FOR TSN

Taylor is known for his speed as a pass rusher, but he also uses strength and leverage.

Jermaine Haley and Ernest Grant, who combined for eight starts last season, provide depth inside.

On the outside, David Bowens and Adewale Ogunleye will be asked to replace Bromell and Mixon in the depth department. If they can produce 10 sacks between them, they will have more than done the job. **GRADE: B**

Linebackers—Zach Thomas is not as gifted athletically as some middle linebackers in the NFL, but few diagnose plays as quickly as he does.

Thomas is the heart of the Dolphins, who need him to succeed on defense even more than the offense needs Williams to step up. But Thomas needs help from the tackles so he doesn't get swallowed up by offensive linemen. The run defense faltered last year when Thomas was not able to break free, and he became more susceptible to injury. Thomas became more of a vocal leader last season. He does not relish that role, but his words carry more weight than anyone else's in the Miami locker room.

The Dolphins need more out of outside linebackers Derrick Rodgers and Morlon Greenwood. Rodgers, coming off shoulder surgery, has the ability to be a good blitz. He was used at times last year in a three-point stance off the edge. Greenwood was bothered by an ankle injury for most of his rookie year but is a quick study. He needs to hold up better at the point of attack and not get lost in the flow of the game.

The biggest question with this group is depth, and the team did not address it in the draft. Tommy Hendricks, Twan Russell and Scott Galyon all can play in a pinch, but they make their livelihoods as special teams stalwarts. If one of the starters goes down for any length of time, the defense will suffer. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—It's the strength of this defense, and the defensive backs should make more plays in 2002. Last year, the run defense did not hold up, so opposing teams didn't have to pass.

Pro Bowl cornerback Sam Madison was not tested much in 2001, and a shoulder injury took away his aggressiveness. When Madison is healthy, there aren't many corners who are better in press coverage. Patrick Surtain is not that far behind, and he is the more physical of the two corners—especially against the run. He will move into the slot in nickel situations, which will make his job harder, but he has the mentality cornerbacks need.

The biggest question mark in the secondary is Jamar Fletcher, who should be the No. 3 corner. Terry Cousin handled the spot more than ably last year but left as a free agent. His job goes to Fletcher, a 2001 first-round pick. Fletcher struggled with technique at times as a rookie but showed pretty good ball skills. Teams will come at him until he proves he can make plays.

After losing free-agent strong safety Brian Walker, the team badly needed to re-sign free safety Brock Marion, and it did. He led the team in interceptions a year ago, and he's a calming influence in the backfield. He makes all the calls, and he has learned how to position himself to make plays.

Arturo Freeman will replace Walker. This is a big year for Freeman, a third-year player who played well in the dime packages and as a part-time starter last season. He has a tendency to go for the big hit, causing him to lose containment. Knowing the job is his should make Freeman a lot better. **GRADE: B+**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Keith Armstrong stepped into a very delicate situation last year in replacing longtime coach Mike Westhoff, but he excelled. Armstrong's coverage units were among the best in the league, and the key players are back. Hendricks deserves Pro Bowl mention for how he covers punts and kicks.

The special teams excellence starts with Olindo Mare, one of the NFL's best kickers. Mare is all but automatic from 40 yards and closer—and is almost as good from 50 yards. And there isn't a better kicker in the clutch. He hasn't missed a winning or tying field-goal attempt in the last two years.

Mare will have his third holder in as many years, as new punter Mark Royals will handle the job. Royals, entering his 14th NFL season, does not have the leg strength of predecessor Matt Turk but is a superior directional kicker. Working with a coverage unit as good as the Dolphins', Royals could

REALIGNMENT reality

The departure of Indianapolis from the AFC East is a good thing because any team with Peyton Manning, Marvin Harrison and Edgerrin James never is easy to prepare for. The Dolphins fared very well against the Colts during their 32 years as division rivals, but why press the issue? The rivalry won't be shut down quite yet, however, because Dolphins will play at Indianapolis, now in the AFC South, this season. Miami will continue to play its other long-time rivals—the Patriots, Bills and Jets—twice a season, so realignment won't mean a major adjustment. But just like last season, the division will be a tough ride. The Jets have a four-year stranglehold on the Dolphins, New England is the defending NFL champions, and the Bills are much improved. Still, the Dolphins have finished first or second in the division the last two years, and there's no reason to believe they can't be that good again.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Williams doesn't have to be the savior in Miami, he just needs to do his part.

have a very good year.

The biggest area of concern is the return game. Punt returner Jeff Ogden fumbled three times last year and wound up sharing the job with Ward, who is not the fastest player in the league but is quick and makes good decisions. After overcoming foot injuries, Ward could win the job.

Chambers and Marion returned kicks last year, but because of their prominent roles on offense and defense, the team would prefer not to use them in that capacity. However, someone will have to step up, or Chambers could end up as the primary kick returner.

Rookie wide receiver Sam Simmons will get a look as a kick and punt returner, and Minor also is in the kick-return mix.

GRADE: B

BOTTOM LINE Since Williams was acquired in early March, the talk has been about the Super Bowl. An improved offense and a top-five defense is tough to beat. Why not talk Super Bowl?

TSN

Todd Archer covers the Dolphins for the Palm Beach Post.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ Oronde Gadsden
■ James McKnight

LT ■ Brent Smith
■ Marcus Spriggs

LG ■ Mark Dixon
□ Andy Vincent

C ■ Tim Ruddy
■ Seth McKinney

RG ■ Leon Searcy
■ Todd Perry

RT ■ Todd Wade
■ Marcus Spriggs

TE ■ Jed Weaver
■ Randy McMichael

WR ● Chris Chambers
□ Jeff Ogden

QB ■ Jay Fiedler
■ Ray Lucas

RB ● Ricky Williams
■ Travis Minor

FB ■ Rob Konrad
■ Deon Dyer

Defense

LE ● Daryl Gardener
□ Adewale Ogunleye

DT ● Tim Bowens
□ Ernest Grant

DT ■ Larry Chester
■ Jermaine Haley

RE ● Jason Taylor
□ David Bowens

WLB ■ Derrick Rodgers
□ Corey Moore

MLB ● Zach Thomas
■ Tommy Hendricks

SLB ■ Morlon Greenwood
■ Twan Russell

CB ● Patrick Surtain
■ Omore Lowe

CB ● Sam Madison
■ Jamar Fletcher

SS ■ Arturo Freeman
■ Shawn Wooden

FS ● Brock Marion
■ Trent Gamble

Specialists

K ● Olindo Mare

P ■ Mark Royals

KR ■ Chris Chambers

PR ■ Dedric Ward

LS ■ Ed Perry

● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

DOLPHINS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
9	Fiedler, Jay	6-2/225	12-29-71	7	Dartmouth	UFA/00	16/16
6	Lucas, Ray	6-3/225	8-6-72	5	Rutgers	FA/01	10/0
8	McNown, Cade	6-1/210	1-12-77	4	UCLA	T-Chi/01	0/0
Running backs							
33	Dyer, Deon (FB)	5-11/255	10-2-77	3	North Carolina	D4/00	16/0
47	Edwards, Robert	5-11/220	10-2-74	4	Georgia	FA/02	0/0
26	Henry, Leonard	6-1/206	1-5-78	R	East Carolina	D7/02	—
44	Konrad, Rob (FB)	6-3/255	11-12-76	4	Syracuse	D2b/99	12/9
28	Minor, Travis	5-10/201	6-30-79	2	Florida State	D3a/01	16/0
34	Williams, Ricky	5-10/230	5-21-77	4	Texas	T-NO/02	16/16
Receivers							
84	Chambers, Chris	5-11/210	8-12-78	2	Wisconsin	D2/01	16/7
86	Gadsden, Oronde	6-2/215	8-20-71	5	Winston-Salem	FA/98	14/14
80	McKnight, James	6-1/198	6-17-72	9	Liberty (Va.)	UFA/01	16/15
48	McMichael, Randy (TE)	6-3/247	6-28-79	R	Georgia	D4/02	—
88	Ogden, Jeff	6-0/187	2-22-75	5	Eastern Washington	T-Dal/00	16/0
89	Perry, Ed (TE)	6-4/270	9-1-74	5	James Madison	D6d/97	16/0
17	Simmons, Sam	5-9/200	11-25-79	R	Northwestern	D5b/02	—
87	Ward, Dedric	5-9/190	9-29-74	6	Northern Iowa	UFA/01	13/1
82	Weaver, Jed (TE)	6-4/262	8-11-76	4	Oregon	W-Phi./00	16/7
Offensive linemen							
65	Andrew, Troy (C)	6-4/305	12-12-77	2	Duke	FA/01	8/0
70	Cesario, Anthony (G)	6-5/305	7-19-76	3	Colorado State	FA/00	0/0
63	Dixon, Mark (G)	6-4/300	11-26-70	5	Virginia	FA/98	10/10
68	McKinney, Seth (C)	6-3/300	6-12-79	R	Texas A&M	D3/02	—
75	Perry, Todd (G)	6-5/305	11-28-70	10	Kentucky	UFA/01	16/16
61	Ruddy, Tim (C)	6-3/300	4-27-72	9	Notre Dame	D2b/94	15/15
72	Searcy, Leon (G)	6-4/320	12-21-69	11	Miami (Fla.)	FA/02	—
74	Smith, Brent (T)	6-5/315	11-21-73	6	Mississippi State	D3d/97	0/0
76	Spriggs, Marcus (T)	6-3/315	5-17-74	6	Houston	UFA/01	1/1
71	Wade, Todd (T)	6-8/325	10-30-76	3	Mississippi	D2/00	15/15
Defensive linemen							
96	Bowens, David (E)	6-3/260	7-3-77	4	Western Illinois	FA/01	8/0
95	Bowens, Tim (T)	6-4/320	2-7-73	9	Mississippi	D1/94	15/15
64	Chester, Larry (T)	6-2/310	10-17-75	5	Temple	UFA/02	11/5
92	Gardener, Daryl (T)	6-6/310	2-25-73	7	Baylor	D1/96	8/8
97	Grant, Ernest (T)	6-5/315	5-17-76	3	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	D6/00	11/3
94	Haley, Jermaine (T)	6-4/305	2-13-73	3	Butte JC (Calif.)	D7a/99	12/5
90	Ogunleye, Adewale (E)	6-4/270	8-9-77	3	Indiana	FA/00	7/0
98	Taylor, Henry (T)	6-2/295	11-29-75	4	South Carolina	FA/01	3/0
99	Taylor, Jason (E)	6-6/260	9-1-74	6	Akron	D3a/97	16/16
Linebackers							
58	Galyon, Scott	6-2/238	3-23-74	7	Tennessee	UFA/00	16/2
52	Greenwood, Morlon	6-0/242	7-17-78	2	Syracuse	D3b/01	14/12
51	Hendricks, Tommy	6-2/233	10-23-78	3	Michigan	FA/00	16/0
57	Moore, Corey	5-11/225	3-20-77	2	Virginia Tech	FA/01	1/1
59	Rodgers, Derrick	6-1/235	10-14-71	6	Arizona State	D3b/97	14/14
56	Russell, Twan	6-1/230	4-25-74	6	Miami (Fla.)	FA/00	16/2
54	Thomas, Zach	5-11/235	9-1-73	7	Texas Tech	D5c/96	15/15
Defensive backs							
41	Brown, Delvin (S)	6-0/205	9-17-79	2	Miami (Fla.)	FA/02	5/0
21	Fletcher, Jamar (CB)	5-9/184	8-28-79	2	Wisconsin	D1/01	14/2
27	Freeman, Arturo (S)	6-0/196	10-27-76	3	South Carolina	D5/00	16/4
42	Gamble, Trent (S)	5-9/195	7-24-77	3	Wyoming	FA/00	1/0
40	Green, Ray (CB)	6-3/187	3-22-77	3	South Carolina	FA/01	4/0
37	Lethridge, Zebbie (CB)	6-0/190	1-31-75	1	Texas Tech	FA/01	2/0
24	Lowe, Omore (CB)	6-0/196	4-20-78	R	Washington	D5a/02	—
29	Madison, Sam (CB)	5-11/185	4-23-74	6	Louisville	D2/97	13/13
31	Marion, Brock (S)	5-11/205	6-11-70	10	Nevada	UFA/98	15/15
43	McGarrahan, Scott (S)	6-1/200	2-12-74	5	New Mexico	D6a/98	16/0
23	Surtain, Patrick (CB)	5-11/192	6-19-76	5	Southern Mississippi	D2a/98	16/16
22	Wooden, Shawn (S)	5-11/205	10-23-73	7	Notre Dame	FA/01	13/0
Specialists							
10	Mare, Olindo (K)	5-10/195	6-6-73	6	Syracuse	FA/97	16/0
3	Royals, Mark (P)	6-5/225	6-22-65	14	Appalachian State	FA/02	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: RB Marlon Barnes, G Jim Bundren, CB Cedric Donaldson, TE Shawn Draper, TE Alonzo Mayes, WR Darnell McDonald, G Jamie Nail, WR Sulecio Sanford, S Scott Shields, LB Joshua Symonette, G Andy Vincent, DE Al Wallace. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Patriots



MARK BOLTON FOR TSN

Brady's composure and decisiveness will prevent him from being a one-year wonder.

BY MICHAEL FELGER

The Patriots may have reached the top of the heap last year, but you wouldn't know it by the measures they have taken to improve their roster this offseason.

They signed nine free agents and made three high-profile trades. They moved up and down the draft board. They dealt with potential problems in the locker room while pouring resources into positions of need on the field. They've tweaked in some places, overhauled in others and never stopped exploring the possibilities.

Here's a scary thought for the rest of the league: The Patriots had middle-of-the-pack talent last year and won the championship. This year, their roster will be deeper and a bit quicker and contain more firepower on offense.

Does that guarantee another title? Of course not. Last year, the Patriots won it all because of coaching, dedication, teamwork and good fortune. And while the coaching remains in place, they can't depend on the other factors happening again.

Consequently, coach Bill Belichick and director of player personnel Scott Pioli

continued with their rebuilding project. Quarterback Drew Bledsoe and troubled wide receiver Terry Glenn no longer fit in the team's plans, so they were dealt. The Patriots needed help at tight end, so they used the free-agent market to add two—Christian Fauria and Cam Cleeland—and then traded up in the first round to draft Daniel Graham. They needed a big receiver, so they signed free agent Donald Hayes. They needed a veteran corner, so they signed Tom Knight. And the list goes on.

The Patriots were in a rare position in today's NFL: They had the roster space and salary-cap room to actually improve the team after winning it all.

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 9	PIT. (Mon.)	9:00	Nov. 10	at Chicago	4:15
Sept. 15	at N.Y. Jets	1:00	Nov. 17	at Oakland	8:30
Sept. 22	KANSAS CITY	1:00	Nov. 24	MINNESOTA	1:00
Sept. 29	at San Diego	4:15	Nov. 28	at Det. (Thanks.)	12:30
Oct. 6	at Miami	1:00	Dec. 8	BUFFALO	1:00
Oct. 13	GREEN BAY	1:00	Dec. 16	at Ten. (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 20	Open date		Dec. 22	N.Y. JETS	8:30
Oct. 27	DENVER	4:15	Dec. 29	MIAMI	1:00
Nov. 3	at Buffalo	1:00	Strength of schedule: T 13th		

COACHING Strategies—The

Patriots will keep things more or less the same on offense, featuring a power running game supported by short, conservative passes. However, they hope to get more down-field production from the passing game, which is essential if they want to loosen up defenses that began to crowd them at the line of scrimmage last year.

The receiving unit had some key additions, so coordinator Charlie Weis will tailor his play calling in that direction. At 6-4, Hayes gives quarterback Tom Brady a sorely needed big target in the red zone and along the sidelines. With Hayes in the lineup, fade routes could return to the offense. The Patriots got only 19 catches from the tight end position last season, which is sure to change with Fauria and Graham leading a long list of tight end candidates. The Patriots believe a high-quality pass-catching tight end is crucial to Brady, whose strength is making quick throws in the possession passing game. Also expect Weis to continue to keep defenses honest with a variety of trick plays.

Defensively, the Patriots will stick with the 4-3 alignment they used at the end of 2001. The lack of impact linebackers makes the move a natural, as does the fact that defensive tackle Richard Seymour is better suited to playing in a gap than lining up directly over the center. Many believe Seymour could have a huge second season,

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

The surprise element always is in their favor. Every game, there's something different. You don't know what to expect. You want to create doubt and indecision for your opponent and eliminate it for your team. And that's what **Bill Belichick** does. ... I think they have a plan for **Tom Brady**. I think they will expand the expectations for him, expand some of the offense, give him a few more options. I can see them doing a little bit more with him. One thing about the NFL: It takes a year for people to figure you out. But they *will* figure you out. ... They moved up to draft the tight end (**Daniel Graham**). Obviously, there were some question marks about the guys they had at tight end last year, and they brought in a guy, **Cam Cleeland**, who has not been

OUTSIDE

Graham

CLIFF GRASSMICK FOR TSN



VIEW

THE PATRIOTS

durable. I expect Graham is going to be a big contributor to their offense. ... You've got to honor the speed of **David Patten**. Even though his hands have gotten better, his speed is better than his hands. In this league, you've got to be a threat. You've got to be productive, but if you're a threat, you get respect. ... I don't think trading **Drew Bledsoe** and drafting **Rohan Davey** was a good tradeoff. The second quarterback now is **Damon Huard**, who hasn't really played much. That's a position where they've got to get stronger. ... They lost **Matt Stevens**, who was a pretty important guy on their defense. He shared the safety spot. When they wanted to play some man and do some other things, he played. He came in and made some plays that a lot of times went unnoticed.

and the 4-3 gives him the best chance to do that.

Whatever the alignment, the philosophy will remain the same: Control the line of scrimmage while mixing coverages in the secondary. This will not be an attacking defense.

Style—Because Belichick has a dry, straightforward demeanor, it's hard to imagine him accomplishing much as a motivator. Yet this team probably was the most motivated in the NFL last season. Go figure.

For many of his motivational techniques, Belichick borrows from the book of former boss Bill Parcells, using props and demonstrations to drive home points. Belichick placed a ship's anchor near the entrance to

the team's weight room, for example, emphasizing the point that being out of shape can weigh a team down. After a 20-point loss at Miami in Week 4, he opened up practice the next day by literally burying the game ball in the ground. When the Patriots inched into contention for the division lead at midseason, Belichick showed his players a tape of a horse race and then stopped the tape as the horses made the final turn. "Who's winning the race?" Belichick asked, then quickly responded himself by saying, "Who cares?" The point was obvious: It only matters how you finish.

While those demonstrations have an effect, it's not the key to Belichick's success. Belichick commands respect because his players have confidence in him as a coach and tactician. All that players want is to be put in a position to make plays—and Belichick does that as well as anyone.

Belichick is not a screamer, just a cold-hearted business man. He leaves the screaming to Weis and special teams coach Brad Seely. **GRADE: A**

OFFENSE

Quarterbacks—All eyes are on Brady as he sets out to prove 2001 was no fluke. Here's why the odds are against Brady being a one-year wonder:

Brady's greatest strength is ability to manage the offense. He consistently puts the offense in short-yardage situations by making the smart throw and staying away from the risky play. He is quick with his reads and decisive with his passes. He is very accurate in the short-to-intermediate passing game, setting a franchise record last year with a completion percentage of 63.9. He makes few mistakes (12 interceptions in 2001), is one of the team's most consistent players and rarely loses his composure under pressure.

In short, Brady's success last year didn't depend on him getting hot as a passer—though he certainly had some good days. Even when Brady goes cold, he does things

that lead to victories. Brady needs to improve his footwork, ability to escape the rush and deep throwing, but his intangibles—intelligence, consistency, hard work—already are top of the line.

Still, the danger of a slump always lurks for a young starter. Brady now is a star, and the heaps of off-field attention he received this offseason will be matched by the attention he gets from defenses. If Brady falls back to earth, he won't be the first. Just don't expect him to hit the ground too hard.

The Patriots have an able backup in Damon Huard, who was 5-1 as a starter with the Dolphins in 1999 and 2000. There will be a spirited battle for the No. 3 job between fourth-round pick Rohan Davey and undrafted rookie free agent Major Applewhite. Don't be surprised if Belichick keeps four quarterbacks. **GRADE: B+**

Running backs—The Patriots locked up Antowain Smith as their running back of the immediate future on the first day of the free-agent season, signing him to a multiyear deal. Though Smith experienced a

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Cincinnati	L	17-23
Sept. 23	N.Y. JETS	L	3-10
Sept. 30	INDIANAPOLIS	W	44-13
Oct. 7	at Miami	L	10-30
Oct. 14	SAN DIEGO (OT)	W	29-26
Oct. 21	at Indianapolis	W	38-17
Oct. 28	at Denver	L	20-31
Nov. 4	at Atlanta	W	24-10
Nov. 11	BUFFALO	W	21-11
Nov. 18	ST. LOUIS	L	17-24
Nov. 25	NEW ORLEANS	W	34-17
Dec. 2	at N.Y. Jets	W	17-16
Dec. 9	CLEVELAND	W	27-16
Dec. 16	at Buffalo (OT)	W	12-9
Dec. 22	MIAMI	W	20-13
Dec. 30	Open date		
Jan. 6	at Carolina	W	38-6
Jan. 19	OAKLAND* (OT)	W	16-13
Jan. 27	at Pittsburgh*	W	24-17
Feb. 3	St. Louis†	W	20-17

*AFC playoff game.

†Super Bowl 36 at New Orleans.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

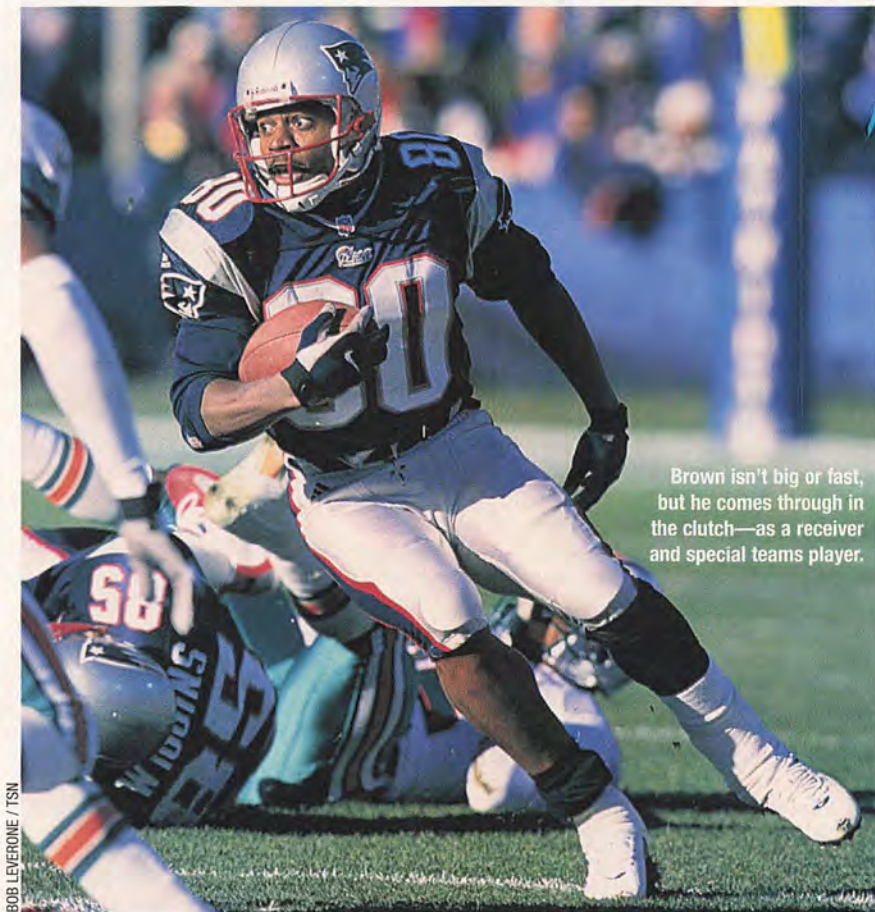
1. The Buffalo games will be the marquee divisional matchups, surpassing the Tuna Bowl series with the Jets and the perennial loathing of Miami. The Drew Bledsoe drama will energize players, coaches and fans.
2. DT Richard Seymour will make a big impact in his second season. He was brought along slowly last year. Now, the team will design plays suited to his strengths.
3. The team's new home at CMGI Field will cause K Adam Vinatieri fits. The stadium is open to the windward north, and the upper decks will create huge wind tunnels.
4. Daniel Graham will have a quiet rookie year. The team traded up to land the tight end but won't hand him the job.
5. Rookie QB Rohan Davey will make a few big plays in the preseason against third-stringers, and fans will call for him to start as soon as Tom Brady struggles.



Seymour

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Brown isn't big or fast, but he comes through in the clutch—as a receiver and special teams player.

Brown is not big (5-10, 193) or fast. However, he has a knack for getting open, getting yards after the catch and getting the job done in clutch situations. Patten is a smallish (5-10, 190), sure-handed receiver who depends on quickness to do the job. He is better suited to being a third or fourth receiver.

There was even more offseason action at the tight end spot. The team added enough talent that it was able to release its top two tight ends, Rod Rutledge and Jermaine Wiggins. With 2001 picks Jabari Holloway and Arther Love already on the roster, the Patriots will have a healthy competition for playing time. Fauria and Graham will stick for sure. If Cleeland can stay healthy, he's probably the most talented of the bunch.

GRADE: B-

Line—Weis often says it takes three years for an offensive lineman to be any good. If that's the case, the Patriots are only going to get better up front. The line made huge strides last year with rookie left tackle Matt Light, second-year right tackle Greg Robinson-Randall and third-year center Damien Woody. If those players continue to progress and the team develops another young guard, this could become one of the better units in the league.

The only things preventing Woody from reaching the Pro Bowl are his weight (320) and his errant shotgun snaps. When Woody gains control of those matters, he should reach the next level. Light must continue to work on his pass protection; he struggled last year against speed rushers.

Veteran guards Mike Compton and Joe Andruzzi set a physical tone up front. On the horizon is massive 2001 fourth-round pick Kenyatta Jones, who could replace Compton or Andruzzi. This could be the last chance for 2000 second-round pick Adrian Klemm to show he belongs in the NFL. He'll have to earn a roster spot as a backup. **GRADE: B-**

DEFENSE Line—A year ago, the Patriots added a huge building block in

rebirth and fit in perfectly with the Patriots' selfless, hard-working personality in 2001, he is 30. If he continues to improve, he will be the exception rather than the rule for running backs. Most go downhill at that point.

The team has reason to believe in Smith. He came into the league rather late and carried a light load during his last two seasons with Buffalo (266 carries in 1999 and 2000 combined). Smith proved his durability late last year as he continued to run hard despite some nagging injuries.

The Patriots love Smith for his ability to pick up tough yards in short-yardage situations and in the red zone. He also is a seasoned bad-weather runner, something that comes in handy in Foxboro. If Smith can approach his production of last year (1,157 yards, 13 touchdowns), the Patriots will be more than happy.

J.R. Redmond has good skills for his role as the third-down back. He has reliable hands and is fantastic at picking up the blitz. If he were more durable and consistent, he would get consideration as an every-down runner. Kevin Faulk could be a spare part on this team.

Fullback Marc Edwards, who can handle the ball in a variety of ways, is a perfect fit for Weis' spread offense. Edwards' blocking is adequate. Backup fullback Patrick Pass also has a good blend of abilities but not a

great deal of size (5-10, 215). **GRADE: B**

Receivers—For all Troy Brown and David Patten did for the offense last year, the Patriots needed a major upgrade in the wideout unit. The team started the process in free agency, addressing its lack of size by signing Hayes. In the draft, the team took care of its need for speed by nabbing burner Deion Branch in the second round. Ideally, Hayes should win a starting job on the outside, opposite Brown, with Patten moving to the slot. The team hopes Branch can at least be a vertical threat as the fourth receiver.

2002 draft picks

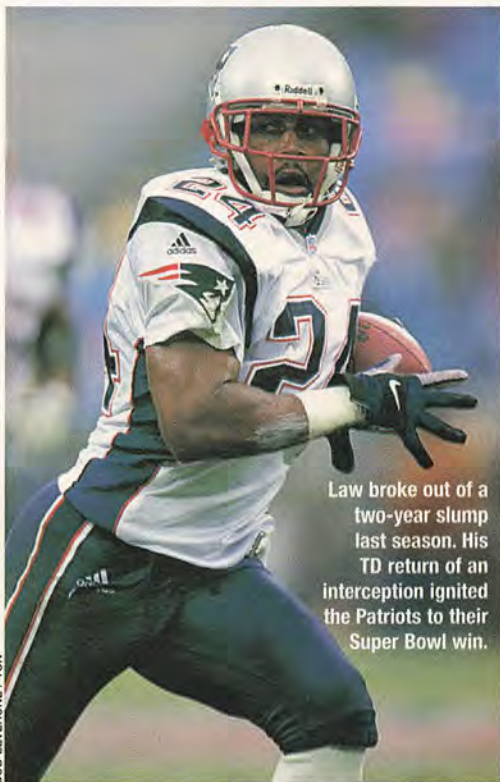
Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-21	Daniel Graham	TE	Colorado	Should be a key part of the offense by the end of rookie season.
2-65	Deion Branch	WR	Louisville	Though small, he runs crisp routes and is tough over the middle.
4-117	Rohan Davey	QB	Louisiana State	Has size and natural ability but is very raw; a definite project.
4-126	Jarvis Green	DE	Louisiana State	Will have to show coaches he can shed blocks to get on field in '02.
7-237	Antwoine Womack	RB	Virginia	Has the skills to play in NFL, but special teams are his best bet.
7-253	David Givens	WR	Notre Dame	Pats like his versatility, but he'll have to earn a job in kicking game.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-29	Chris Canty	DB	Kansas State	Out of football
'98-18	Robert Edwards	RB	Georgia	In Dolphins camp
'98-22	Tebucky Jones	DB	Syracuse	Starter with Patriots
'99-17	Damien Woody	C	Boston College	Starter with Patriots
'99-28	Andy Katzenmoyer	LB	Ohio State	Has severe neck injury; might retire
'00	None			
'01-6	Richard Seymour	DT	Georgia	Starter with Patriots

Seymour, a playmaking tackle. But Seymour is the team's only young blue-chip prospect.

The only other defensive linemen on the roster under the age of 28 with NFL experience are role players David Nugent and Jace Saylor. Translation: The Patriots once again plan to rely on a rotation of veterans. It worked last year as ends Anthony Pleasant and Bobby Hamilton fit perfectly into Belichick's system and consistently made plays. Look for both to start again. Also in the mix are two more former Jets—tackle Steve Martin, who figures to start inside next to Seymour, and Rick Lyle, who will provide depth at end.



Law broke out of a two-year slump last season. His TD return of an interception ignited the Patriots to their Super Bowl win.

The wild card up front is end/outside linebacker Willie McGinest, an eight-year veteran. When he is healthy and playing in a rhythm, as he was during last season's playoffs, the Patriots have a strong outside pass rusher who can chase down quarterbacks. If McGinest is on the sideline, the face of the defense changes. Rookie end Jarvis Green, a fourth-round pick out of LSU, is McGinest's understudy.

Because the Patriots are going primarily with four-man line this season, a lot will be asked of this unit. The core philosophy up front won't change, however. The first priority of the linemen will be tying up blockers and controlling the line of scrimmage, not splitting gaps and getting into the backfield.

GRADE: B

Linebackers—It will be interesting to see how things play out at middle linebacker, a job that Tedy Bruschi assumed midway through last season and did very well.

Bruschi, who had moved over from his weakside 'backer position, is a consistent playmaker with a great nose for the ball. He's a sure tackler against the run and an able cover man. But he doesn't have classic middle linebacker size. It's up to the coaches whether they believe his skills are better suited to playing inside or outside.

In an ideal world, Ted Johnson's body would cooperate and he would play a full season at middle linebacker. Johnson is a classic, run-stuffing linebacker, and with him in the middle, Bruschi could play his natural position on the outside.

Outside linebacker Mike Vrabel, a hidden gem discovered in free agency last year, returns to play a big role on the outside. Roman Phifer also played well on the outside last year, but if he departs as a free agent, free-agent pickup Ryan Phillips must fill the void. It appears linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer won't be a factor after his second neck surgery in a year.

GRADE: B-

Secondary—It took this group a long time to grasp Belichick's complicated coverage schemes, but once they did, the results were dramatic. The strength of this unit is that it can be very physical when it desires. Just ask the Rams' receivers, who were hit hard and often in the Super Bowl.

Cornerback Ty Law broke out of a two-year slump late last year and re-emerged as one of the better corners in the AFC. Otis Smith, 37, ably handled the other side. Added to the mix is Knight, who gives Belichick coveted experience and size (6-0, 196) in his nickel and dime packages.

In Lawyer Milloy and Tebucky Jones, the Patriots have two safeties who make up for their lack of coverage skills with intimidating, physical play. Jones, after struggling as a cornerback during his first three seasons, made huge strides as a free safety last year and was the most improved player on the team.

The secondary was at its best when offenses traveled deep into Patriots territory in 2001. New England held opponents to just 19 touchdowns in 49 trips into the red zone—the top percentage in the AFC. If the unit can tighten up in the middle of the field in 2002, the Patriots are in business.

GRADE: B

SPECIAL TEAMS Many contend the special teams won the championship for the Patriots last season. It's not a hard argument to make.

Not only is Brown the team's top offensive threat, he may be the most valuable special teams player in the league. There is no more instinctive, intelligent punt returner, and he showed last year that he also can break the big one. In addition, Brown

Moves

Key additions

TE Cam Cleeland
TE Christian Fauria
S Chris Hayes
WR Donald Hayes
S Rob Kelly
CB Tom Knight
DE Rick Lyle
DT Steve Martin
LB Ryan Phillips

Free agent/Saints
Free agent/Seahawks
Free agent/Jets
Free agent/Panthers
Free agent
Free agent/Cardinals
Free agent/Jets
Free agent/Jets
Free agent/Colts

Key losses

S Hakim Akbar
QB Drew Bledsoe
CB Terrell Buckley
LB Bryan Cox
WR Terry Glenn
WR Charles Johnson
DT Brandon Mitchell
LB Marty Moore
TE Rod Rutledge
CB Terrance Shaw
S Matt Stevens
TE Jermaine Wiggins

Free agent/Texans
Trade/Bills
Free agent
Free agent/Saints
Trade/Packers
Free agent
Free agent/Seahawks
Free agent
Free agent/Texans
Free agent/Raiders
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Colts

Stadium/Media

CMGI Field (68,000, grass).

Ticket information: 508-543-1776.

Training site: Bryant College, Smithfield, R.I., 508-543-8200.

Radio: WBCN-FM (104.1).

Website: www.patriots.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 11-5 (1st in AFC East); 6-2 in division; 8-4 in conference; 3-1 vs. NFC; 6-2 at home; 5-3 on road; 3-0 on artificial turf; 3-0 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Defeated Oakland, 16-13 (OT), in AFC semifinal game; defeated Pittsburgh, 24-17, in AFC championship game; defeated St. Louis, 20-17, in Super Bowl 36.

Bill Belichick's regular-season record: 16-16 in two seasons with Patriots; 52-60 overall in seven seasons with Patriots and original Cleveland Browns.

Belichick's postseason record: 3-0 in one appearance with Patriots; 4-1 overall in two appearances with Patriots and Browns (1-0 in Super Bowl).

Team record last five years: 43-37 (.538, ranks 13th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*305.1	9	19
Rushing offense	*112.1	T8	T12
Passing offense	*193.1	11	22
Scoring offense	371	3	6
Total defense	*334.5	14	24
Rushing defense	*115.9	10	19
Passing defense	*218.6	14	24
Scoring defense	272	3	6
Takeaways	35	4	8
Giveaways	28	T7	T13
Turnover differential	7	T4	T9
Sacks	41	T6	T13
Sacks allowed	46	T12	T22

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Bill Belichick	Head coach	28	4
Dante Scarnecchia	Asst. head coach/off. line	21	12
Charlie Weis	Off. coord./quarterbacks	13	7
Romeo Crennel	Defensive coord./def. line	22	2
Brian Daboll	Wide receivers	1	1
Jeff Davidson	Asst. offensive line/TEs	8	6
Ivan Fears	Running backs	12	4
Pepper Johnson	Inside linebackers	3	3
Eric Mangini	Defensive backs	7	3
Marius Paul	Asst. strength and cond.	5	3
Rob Ryan	Outside linebackers	5	3
Brad Seely	Special teams	14	4
Mike Woicik	Strength and conditioning	13	3

REALIGNMENT reality

There are two ways to look at the Colts leaving the division. On one hand, the Patriots won't have to face the most explosive offensive team in the conference—with Peyton Manning, Edgerrin James and Marvin Harrison—twice a year. On the other hand, coach Bill Belichick has had a great deal of success, perhaps more than any other coach, at defending Manning and the Colts. The Patriots have won three of four meetings against the Colts with Belichick on the job. Meanwhile, the games against Buffalo take on added meaning, and not just because Drew Bledsoe is wearing a rival uniform. The Patriots were miffed at some of the tactics used by Bills G.M. Tom Donahoe during the Bledsoe trade process. The Patriots better get their run defense fired up because now they have to deal with Miami's Ricky Williams twice a year in addition to the Jets' Curtis Martin.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

The defense's wild card up front is McGinest, who trumps opponents when he is on the field.

proved his worth on other special teams units. His recovery and lateral of a blocked field-goal attempt (which went for a touch-down) in the AFC championship game stands as a signature play.

Adam Vinatieri had as prolific of a play-off run as any kicker in history, capped by his game-winning 48-yarder in the Super Bowl. The Patriots love him for his proficient kicking in bad weather, something that will come in handy at sure-to-be-windy CMGI Field, the team's new home. Vinatieri could stand to improve his kickoffs.

Punter Ken Walter's play mirrored that of his team—he was best around the end zone. Walter's 40.1 gross average ranked 14th in the AFC. But his high kicks and big hang time gave him a net average of 38.1, second best in the NFL. Walter had 24 kicks downed inside the 20.

The Patriots' weakest spot on special teams was returning kickoffs, a chore handled by Pass last season. Perhaps Branch will pick up the slack for the team in this area.

GRADE: A

BOTTOM LINE In terms of talent, the Patriots have just begun to inch their way out of the middle of the pack. The schedule is very difficult. Expectations are high, and their old players only are getting older. Repeat? It's hard to imagine. Then again, winning the Super Bowl was impossible to imagine last year.

TSN

Michael Felger covers the Patriots for the Boston Herald.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Troy Brown
	■ David Patten
LT	■ Matt Light
	□ Adrian Klemm
LG	■ Mike Compton
	□ Kenyatta Jones
C	● Damien Woody
	□ Grey Ruggamer
RG	■ Joe Andruzzi
	□ Kenyatta Jones
RT	■ G. Robinson-Randall
	□ Grant Williams
TE	■ Christian Fauria
	■ Daniel Graham
WR	■ Donald Hayes
	□ Deion Branch
QB	■ Tom Brady
	■ Damon Huard
RB	■ Antowain Smith
	■ J.R. Redmond
FB	■ Marc Edwards
	■ Patrick Pass

Defense

LE	■ Bobby Hamilton
	● Willie McGinest
LT	■ Steve Martin
	□ David Nugent
RT	● Richard Seymour
	□ Jace Saylor
RE	■ Anthony Pleasant
	□ Rick Lyle
OLB	■ Mike Vrabel
	□ Ryan Phillips
MLB	■ Tedy Bruschi
	■ Ted Johnson
OLB	● Roman Phifer
	■ Larry Izzo
CB	■ Ty Law
	■ Tom Knight
CB	■ Otis Smith
	□ Leonard Myers
SS	● Lawyer Milloy
	■ Je'Rod Cherry
FS	■ Tebucky Jones
	■ Antwan Harris

Specialists

K	● Adam Vinatieri
P	● Ken Walter
KR	□ Patrick Pass
PR	● Troy Brown
LS	● Lonnie Paxton
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

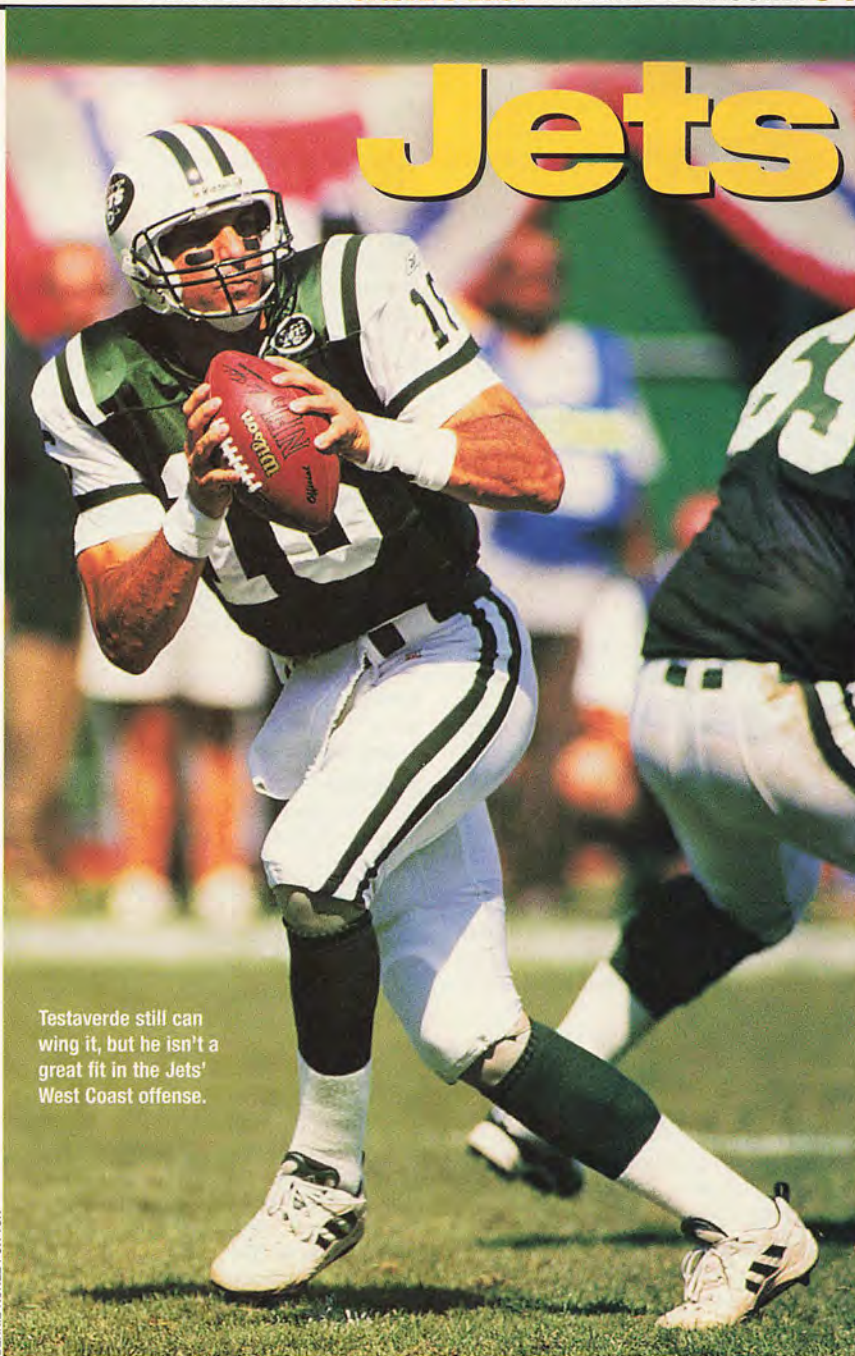
PATRIOTS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
	Applewhite, Major	6-0/206	7-26-78	R	Texas	FA/02	—
12	Brady, Tom	6-4/220	8-3-77	3	Michigan	D6b/00	15/14
	Davey, Rohan	6-2/245	4-14-78	R	Louisiana State	D4a/02	—
19	Huard, Damon	6-3/220	7-9-73	6	Washington	FA/01	0/0
Running backs							
	Dragos, Scott (FB)	6-2/245	10-28-75	2	Boston College	FA/99	6/0
44	Edwards, Marc (FB)	6-0/245	11-17-74	6	Notre Dame	UFA/01	16/13
33	Faulk, Kevin	5-8/202	6-5-76	4	Louisiana State	D2/99	15/1
35	Pass, Patrick	5-10/215	12-31-77	3	Georgia	D7b/00	16/0
21	Redmond, J.R.	5-11/215	9-28-77	3	Arizona State	D3/00	12/0
32	Smith, Antowain	6-2/230	3-14-72	6	Houston	FA/01	16/15
	Womack, Antwoine	5-11/214	3-20-78	R	Virginia	D7a/02	—
Receivers							
	Branch, Deion	5-9/191	7-18-79	R	Louisville	D2/02	—
80	Brown, Troy	5-10/193	7-2-71	10	Marshall	D8/93	16/12
85	Cleeland, Cam (TE)	6-4/272	8-15-75	3	Washington	D2/99	9/7
84	Coleman, Fred	6-0/190	1-31-75	2	Washington	FA/01	8/0
	Fauria, Christian (TE)	6-4/245	9-22-71	7	Colorado	D2/95	16/11
	Givens, David	6-0/217	8-16-80	R	Notre Dame	D7b/02	—
	Graham, Daniel (TE)	6-3/248	11-16-78	R	Colorado	D1/02	—
	Hayes, Donald	6-4/208	7-13-75	5	Wisconsin	UFA/02	16/15
86	Patten, David	5-10/195	8-19-74	6	Western Carolina	UFA/01	16/14
66	Paxton, Lonie (TE)	6-2/260	3-13-78	3	Sacramento State	FA/00	16/0
Offensive linemen							
63	Andruzzi, Joe (G)	6-3/315	8-23-75	6	So. Connecticut State	FA/00	16/16
77	Compton, Mike	6-6/310	9-18-70	10	West Virginia	UFA/01	16/16
74	Jones, Kenyatta	6-3/305	1-18-79	2	South Florida	D4/01	5/0
70	Klemm, Adrian (T)	6-3/312	5-21-77	3	Hawaii	D2/00	0/0
72	Light, Matt (T)	6-4/305	6-23-78	2	Purdue	D2/01	14/12
64	Robinson-Randall, G. (T)	6-5/322	6-23-78	3	Michigan State	D4/00	16/16
67	Ruggamer, Grey (G)	6-5/300	6-1-76	4	Arizona State	FA/00	14/1
76	Williams, Grant (T)	6-7/320	5-10-74	6	Louisiana Tech	UFA/00	14/4
65	Woody, Damien (C)	6-3/320	11-3-77	4	Boston College	D1a/99	16/15
Defensive linemen							
	Green, Jarvis (E)	6-3/272	1-12-79	R	Louisiana State	D4b/02	—
91	Hamilton, Bobby (E)	6-5/280	7-1-71	8	Southern Mississippi	UFA/00	16/15
95	Lyle, Rick (E)	6-5/290	2-26-71	7	Missouri	UFA/97	16/3
90	Martin, Steve (T)	6-4/312	5-31-74	6	Missouri	UFA/01	16/15
55	McGinest, Willie (E)	6-5/270	12-11-71	9	Southern California	D1/94	11/5
92	Nugent, David (E)	6-4/295	10-27-77	3	Purdue	D6c/00	9/1
98	Pleasant, Anthony (E)	6-5/280	1-27-68	13	Tennessee State	UFA/01	16/16
94	Saylor, Jace	6-5/295	2-27-79	2	Michigan State	FA/01	2/1
93	Seymour, Richard (T)	6-6/305	10-6-79	2	Georgia	D1/01	13/10
Linebackers							
99	Ayi, Kole	6-1/231	9-27-78	2	Massachusetts	W-NYG/01	7/0
54	Bruschi, Tedy	6-1/245	6-9-73	7	Arizona	D3/96	15/9
58	Chatham, Matt	6-4/250	6-28-77	3	South Dakota	W-StL/00	11/0
53	Izzo, Larry	5-10/228	9-26-74	7	Rice	UFA/01	16/0
52	Johnson, Ted	6-4/255	12-4-72	8	Colorado	D2/95	12/5
	Phifer, Roman	6-2/248	3-5-68	12	UCLA	UFA/01	16/16
	Phillips, Ryan	6-4/252	2-7-74	5	Idaho	UFA/01	13/6
96	Tuitele, Maugaula	6-2/255	5-26-78	1	Colorado State	FA/00	1/0
50	Vrabel, Mike	6-4/250	8-14-75	6	Ohio State	UFA/01	16/12
Defensive backs							
30	Cherry, Je'Rod (S)	6-1/205	5-30-73	7	California	UFA/01	16/0
23	Harris, Antwan (CB)	5-9/190	5-29-77	3	Virginia	D6a/00	11/1
	Hayes, Chris (S)	6-0/206	5-7-72	5	Washington State	T-GB/96	16/1
34	Jones, Tebucky (S)	6-2/220	10-6-74	5	Syracuse	D1b/98	16/12
31	Kelly, Ben (CB)	5-9/185	9-15-78	3	Colorado	W-Mia/01	4/0
	Knight, Tom (CB)	6-0/196	12-29-74	5	Iowa	D1/97	8/8
24	Law, Ty (CB)	5-11/200	2-10-74	8	Michigan	D1/95	16/16
36	Milloy, Lawyer (S)	6-0/210	11-14-73	7	Washington	D2/96	16/16
25	Myers, Leonard (CB)	5-10/195	12-18-78	2	Miami	D6/01	7/0
45	Smith, Otis (CB)	5-11/195	10-22-65	13	Missouri	FA/00	15/15
Specialists							
4	Vinatieri, Adam (K)	6-0/200	12-28-72	7	South Dakota State	FA/96	16/0
13	Walter, Ken (P)	6-1/195	8-15-72	6	Kent	FA/01	11/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: TE Jabari Holloway, TE Arther Love, CB Brock Williams. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Jets



Testaverde still can wing it, but he isn't a great fit in the Jets' West Coast offense.

BERNIE NUNEZ FOR TSN

BY RICH CIMINI

Herman Edwards coached Bill Parcells' old team to the playoffs last season. This time, it's Edwards' team. With his kind of players. With his schemes, for better or worse.

If it ain't broke, fix it anyway.

Unhappy with the composition of the defense—a defense that carried the Jets to a wild-card berth—Edwards and G.M. Terry Bradway unleashed a wrecking ball. Result: Six starters from last season are gone.

They overhauled the secondary, signed former Pro Bowl linebacker Sam Cowart and used their No. 1 draft pick on speed rusher Bryan Thomas. The defense sacrificed girth for speed, which is the Edwards

way. If heady coordinator Ted Cottrell can mesh the new talent—and there's no reason to doubt him—the Jets will have a top 10 defense.

"It looks like a different football team on defense to me," Edwards says. "We have some speed."

That should translate into another playoff appearance—unless the offense continues its stagnant ways.

Unlike the defense, the offense was broke in 2001, but the Jets opted not to fix it. Despite finishing 24th in total offense, the club stood pat, assuming the players would perform better after having spent a year in coordinator Paul Hackett's complex West Coast system. That might be a fair expectation, but Hackett also must do a better job

of galvanizing the talent.

Hackett's rocky relationship with quarterback Vinny Testaverde bears watching. If things get tense, as they did late last season, it could have an adverse effect on the entire unit. Chad Pennington is waiting in the wings, and there will come a time—perhaps this season—when Edwards will make that change.

When he does, it will mark the final, symbolic break from Parcells.

COACHING Strategies—

Edwards will run his style of defense, a 4-3 scheme, with a penetrating, one-gap technique up front and a heavy dose of two-deep zone in the secondary. That was the plan last season, but the personnel didn't fit the system and the Jets had to adjust on the fly.

They wound up a respectable 19th in total defense, but Edwards has insisted on implementing his style, a carbon copy of the system he helped implement as an assistant in Tampa Bay. So the Jets added size in the secondary and speed in the defensive line. Too bad they couldn't add Warren Sapp.

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	at Buffalo	1:00	Nov. 10	MIAMI	8:30
Sept. 15	NEW ENGLAND	1:00	Nov. 17	at Detroit	4:15
Sept. 22	at Miami	1:00	Nov. 24	BUFFALO	1:00
Sept. 29	at Jacksonville	1:00	Dec. 2	at Oak. (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 6	KANSAS CITY	4:05	Dec. 8	DENVER	4:15
Oct. 13	Open date		Dec. 15	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 20	MINNESOTA	1:00	Dec. 22	at New Eng.	8:30
Oct. 27	CLEVELAND	1:00	Dec. 29	GREEN BAY	4:15
Nov. 3	at San Diego	4:05	Strength of schedule: 22nd		

It's a basic scheme, designed to let the players play. It's fine if you have the horses on the line, but if the front four can't generate a pass rush, the soft zone coverage will get shredded.

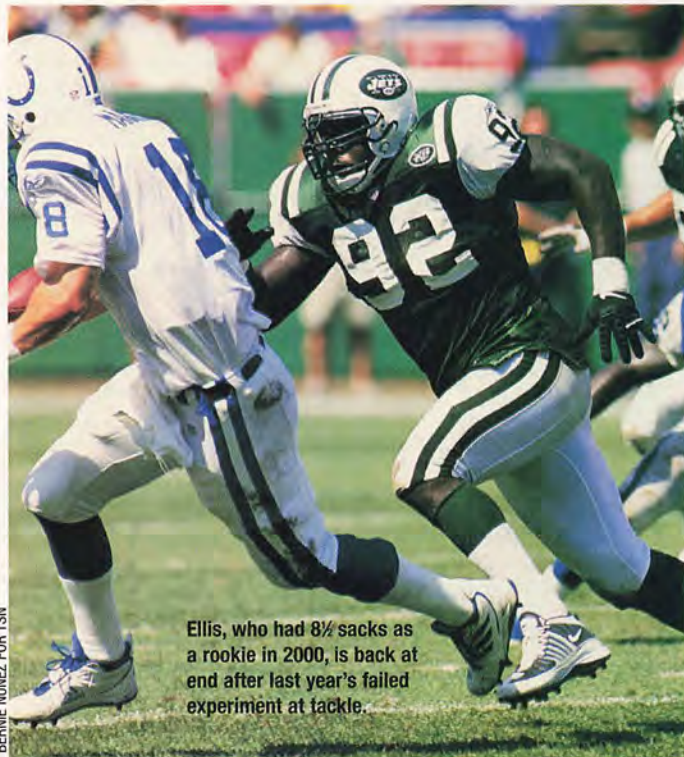
Offensively, Hackett must alter his conservative philosophy to mesh with the defensive game plan. When using a Bucs-style defense, a team functions best when it jumps to an early lead. Small, speedy linemen such as Thomas and John Abraham will be a lot more effective in a pass-rushing mode when the opponent is playing catch-up.

Those speedy, small linemen also tend to wear down in the fourth quarter, which makes it imperative that Hackett be more aggressive with his play-calling.

Significantly, Edwards vows to be more involved in the offense. He won't call plays, but he will attend meetings, steering Hackett away from his conservative style. If anything, that should pacify Testaverde.

Style—Edwards is a Tony Dungy clone, laid-back and upbeat. He doesn't yell or criticize players publicly. He's an excellent communicator and a good teacher. He's loyal, almost to a fault.

His style is fine for players such as Curtis Martin and Wayne Chrebet, classic self-motivators, but it doesn't work well for everybody. Edwards runs a loose ship, and



Ellis, who had 8½ sacks as a rookie in 2000, is back at end after last year's failed experiment at tackle.

BERNIE NUNEZ FOR TSN

some players try to take advantage. In terms of X's and O's, his game and clock management, especially in two-minute situations, must improve.

Cottrell also has a low-key approach, but he gets feisty when necessary. The players respect him immensely. He can joke with the players, then kick them in the rear. Year after year, he has proved to be one of the better defensive coordinators in the league.

Hackett is a high-strung coach who has yet to endear himself to some of the key veterans on offense, and that should be a concern. He's an extremely bright offensive mind, but he doesn't always coach that way.

Special teams coordinator Mike Westhoff brings a refreshing swagger to the staff, and it's reflected in his coaching. He's not afraid to take chances. He knows how to attack opponents' weaknesses. **GRADE: B+**

OFFENSE **Quarterback**—Once again, Testaverde has a body part under the microscope. Two years ago, it was a surgically repaired Achilles' tendon. This time, it's his right foot.

A benign bone tumor was removed in March, causing Testaverde to miss the offseason workout program. He's expected to be 100 percent for training camp, though the lost conditioning time has to be a concern.

Testaverde, 38, goes into camp as the undisputed starter, comfortably ahead of Pennington. If Testaverde hits a prolonged slump, it could get interesting. The coaching staff would like to give Pennington a real shot, but the 2000 No. 1 pick hasn't provided any tangible evidence that he can do the job.

Nonetheless, Edwards plans to give Pennington one or two series per game. This is only inviting trouble, perhaps even a quarterback controversy. The time to experiment is the preseason, not the regular season.

Testaverde still can throw it with the best of them, but he's not a great fit in the West Coast offense. Truth is, he hasn't been a consistent quarterback since 1998, his signature season. He can amaze one minute, then break your heart the next. But know this: He's

still one of the most respected players in the locker room.

Pennington has to be wondering about his future. Of the 35 quarterbacks drafted in the first round from 1982 to 2000, he is the only one who didn't start a game in his first two seasons.

He possesses all the intangibles—brains, toughness and a strong work ethic—but he's too methodical, and his fastball lacks that extra zip. The club still is hoping he can be the starter in 2003.

Multitalented Tory Woodbury, who can play on special teams, is the No. 3 quarterback. **GRADE: C+**

Running backs—What more can you expect from Curtis Martin, who rushed for a career-high 1,513 yards last season? He

remains the heart and soul of the offense, though it will be interesting to see how much his workload decreases.

At 29, with more than 2,300 carries in his stellar career, Martin has reached the point where, historically, the great ones start to slip. Some within the organization believe he started to tire at the end of last season, and it's no wonder. Edwards never made good on his vow to spell Martin with rookie LaMont Jordan.

Look for that to change. In limited duty (46 touches), Jordan flashed big-play ability. Clearly, he needs to get the ball in his hands more than two or three times a game—and he will. His young and powerful legs could add a much-needed spark to the offense.

Fullback Richie Anderson, two years removed from the Pro Bowl, will continue to see his role shrink. He can catch the ball in a variety of places but won't get enough throws to keep him busy. He's not a great blocker, and he tends to fumble at inopportune times.

Scatback Chad Morton also will be in search of a role. Good luck finding one, except for special teams. Ditto for Jerald Sowell. **GRADE: A**

Receivers—The Jets need more production out of the wideouts, who combined for only eight touchdowns last season (seven by Laveranues Coles).

Santana Moss, who missed most of his rookie season with a knee injury, should make a difference—assuming he's healthy. In February, he underwent an arthroscopic procedure on his surgically repaired knee, the second surgery in a six-month span. The Jets are keeping their fingers crossed that Moss hasn't lost any of his quickness and jack-rabbit acceleration, which can bring a new dimension to the offense.

Eventually, Moss will assume some of Chrebet's playing time, which could be a delicate situation. Chrebet is a fan favorite, but he doesn't seem to be a Hackett favorite (and vice versa). There were long stretches last season when Hackett seemed to forget about Chrebet in his play-calling. That's

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-22	Bryan Thomas	DE	Ala.-Birmingham	Will begin his career as a situational edge pass rusher.
2-57	Jon McGraw	S	Kansas State	Workout warrior isn't known as a playmaker. Hello, special teams.
3-88	Chris Baker	TE	Michigan State	A natural pass catcher. Too bad the Jets needed a blocking tight end.
4-121	Alan Harper	DT	Fresno State	Doesn't have great speed but has quickness. Potential sleeper.
5-154	Jonathan Goodwin	G	Michigan	Moves pretty well, giving him a chance to succeed in Jets' scheme.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-8	James Farrior	LB	Virginia	Starter with Steelers
'98	None			
'99	None			
'00-12	Shaun Ellis	DE	Tennessee	Starter with Jets
'00-13	John Abraham	LB	South Carolina	Starter with Jets
'00-18	Chad Pennington	QB	Marshall	Backup with Jets
'00-27	Anthony Becht	TE	West Virginia	Starter with Jets
'01-16	Santana Moss	WR	Miami (Fla.)	Backup with Jets

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

Defensively, they have some big question marks. They lost their two starting corners to expansion. Can **(Aaron) Beasley** and **(Donnie) Abraham** fill in? **James Farrior** is another big loss, at linebacker. Can **Sam Cowart** come back to where he was before he got hurt last year and replace Farrior? ... They went after **Bryan Thomas** in the draft. Maybe that shows they've given up on **Shaun Ellis** in terms of rushing the passer. They've tried him inside and outside, and he had an off year last year. Thomas is a talented guy, but he didn't play every down in college. So that's a question mark, whether they can get that pass rush with him. ... At receiver, they should be better off with **Santana Moss** healthy. But they really only have three, and they're

OUTSIDE

Beasley



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

VIEW

THE JETS

all small. **Kevin Swayne** is his fourth, but he's not really a guy who scares you. I think you want bigger receivers if you're going to run that so-called West Coast offense. And **Vinny (Testaverde)** is a down-the-field type thrower. I don't think the West Coast really suits what they have. ... They still have one of the best running backs in the league in **Curtis Martin**. He's the guy who makes them tick. ... Losing their right tackle (**Ryan Young**) and left guard (**Kerry Jenkins**) create the two biggest question marks on offense. The line was probably one of the best in the AFC last year. They're still real good at right guard, center and left tackle. They signed **Dave Szott**, who played OK for Washington, to play left guard. But he has 12 years in the league. Can he hold up?

inexcusable, especially on third down, when Chrebet is at his best.

Coles, the biggest surprise of 2001, should be even better after a full season of starting experience. He's a tough, physical receiver with excellent speed, though he tends to disappear for long stretches.

The No. 4 receiver is 6-1 Kevin Swayne, the only wideout with any size. But with three receivers ahead of him, he won't get much playing time. The Jets could use a big man to run those patented, over-the-middle routes in Hackett's system.

They also need a better year out of tight end Anthony Becht, who made nice strides last season but still is prone to the dropsies. Becht is a receiving threat in the red zone—

five of his 36 receptions were touchdowns—but he must show more consistency. Rookie Chris Baker is a natural pass catcher who, somewhere down the road, could threaten Becht. What the Jets need is a big, blocking tight end. **GRADE: B-**

Line—It will be tough to duplicate last season's performance. The Jets finished fourth in rushing offense and surrendered only 19 sacks.

This year, with two starters gone—left guard Kerry Jenkins and right tackle Ryan Young—there could be a drop-off. The line also lost highly respected coach Bill Mui, who went to the Bucs. He was replaced by Doug Marrone, who has no NFL coaching experience but did play two years in the league.

The Jets filled Jenkins' spot by signing 12-year veteran Dave Szott, who resuscitated his career with the Redskins last season. It should be a smooth transition for Szott, who played in Hackett's system with the Chiefs.

The big question mark is Kareem McKenzie. Initially, McKenzie was slated to replace Young, but the team is experimenting with him at left tackle. McKenzie, a third-round pick in 2001, should be able to handle the assignment from a mental standpoint, but his physical skills haven't been tested under fire. Assigning him to protect Testaverde's blind side is a gamble.

Kevin Mawae, a Pro Bowl starter each of the last three years, might be the best center in the NFL. He's

smart, quick and tenacious. Right guard Randy Thomas is a gifted player who could be great, but he has to push harder. Jason Fabini, who will play right tackle if McKenzie can handle the left side, is a throwback type. He's not flashy or dominant but rarely has a bad game.

The depth is somewhat of a concern. J.P. Machado is the ideal sixth man, capable of filling in at guard or center, but the first tackle off the bench is graybeard Jumbo Elliott. He's 37 and coming off a one-year

retirement. Rookie Jonathan Goodwin could be the fourth guard. **GRADE: B+**

DEFENSE Line—This could be the most improved area on the team, especially in terms of speed.

The Jets are loaded at end, with Abraham, Shaun Ellis, newcomer Steve White and No. 1 pick Thomas, a speed rusher in the Abraham mold. They will comprise a four-man rotation. On passing downs, Abraham and Thomas will rush from the ends, with Ellis sliding inside.

The key is Ellis, who slumped last year after a promising rookie season in 2000. The former No. 1 pick, who is back at end after a failed experiment at the 3-technique tackle, has talent, but he needs to

check his motor. If he doesn't rebound, he could be a goner in 2003. He will be pushed by White, a former Bucs backup who knows the scheme.

The Jets desperately need another pass rusher to take the heat off Abraham, who faced frequent double-teaming last year. He still managed 13 sacks, but he's far from being a complete player. He needs to get stronger against the run. His potential is unlimited. Ditto for Thomas, who will be used as a situational rusher until he's ready for every-down duty.

Slow-footed tackles Shane Burton and Steve Martin, stop-gap starters last season, are gone. Martin will be replaced at nose tackle by Jason Ferguson, who missed the

2001 results

Sept. 9	INDIANAPOLIS	L	24-45
Sept. 23	at New England	W	10-3
Oct. 1	SAN FRANCISCO	L	17-19
Oct. 7	at Buffalo	W	42-36
Oct. 14	MIAMI	W	21-17
Oct. 21	ST. LOUIS	L	14-34
Oct. 28	at Carolina	W	13-12
Nov. 4	at New Orleans	W	16-9
Nov. 11	KANSAS CITY	W	27-7
Nov. 18	at Miami	W	24-0
Nov. 25	Open date		
Dec. 2	NEW ENGLAND	L	16-17
Dec. 9	at Pittsburgh	L	7-18
Dec. 16	CINCINNATI	W	15-14
Dec. 23	at Indianapolis	W	29-28
Dec. 30	BUFFALO	L	9-14
Jan. 6	at Oakland	W	24-22
Jan. 12	at Oakland*	L	24-38

*AFC playoff game.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Pass-rushing ends John Abraham and Bryan Thomas will combine for 25 sacks. You're talking about a pair of 260-pounders with 4.5 speed.
2. Curtis Martin will crack the 1,000-yard rushing mark for the eighth straight year, but promising second-year back LaMont Jordan will have a significant role by the home stretch.
3. QB Vinny Testaverde and offensive coordinator Paul Hackett, coming off a rocky first season together, will be at each other's throats by October. Coach Herman Edwards will intervene, taking a bigger role in the offensive decision-making.
4. The Jets will have problems stopping the run—again—thanks to an unsettled situation at tackle.
5. New punter Matt Turk will compile 500 net yards more than his predecessor, Tom Tupa.



Abraham

Moves

Key additions

CB Donnie Abraham	Free agent/Buccaneers
CB Aaron Beasley	Free agent/Jaguars
LB Sam Cowart	Free agent/Bills
SS Sam Garnes	Free agent/Giants
G Dave Szott	Free agent/Redskins
P Matt Turk	Free agent/Dolphins
DT Larry Webster	Free agent/Ravens
DE Steve White	Free agent/Buccaneers

Key losses

DT Shane Burton	Free agent/Panthers
CB Marcus Coleman	Expansion draft/Texans
LB James Farrior	Free agent/Steelers
CB Aaron Glenn	Expansion draft/Texans
SS Victor Green	Free agent
WR Matthew Hatchette	Free agent/Raiders
S Chris Hayes	Free agent
OL Kerry Jenkins	Free agent/Buccaneers
G David Loverne	Trade/Redskins
DE Rick Lyle	Free agent/Patriots
NT Steve Martin	Free agent/Patriots
DE Eric Ogbogu	Free agent/Bengals
P Tom Tupa	Free agent
OT Ryan Young	Expansion draft/Texans

Stadium/Media

Giants Stadium (79,466, grass).

Ticket information: 516-560-8200.

Training site: Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y.; 516-560-8288.

Radio: MSG Radio, 770 AM & 1880 AM.

Website: www.newyorkjets.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 10-6 (3rd in AFC East); 5-3 in division; 8-4 in conference; 2-2 vs. NFC; 3-5 at home; 7-1 on road; 3-0 on artificial turf; 7-6 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Lost to Oakland, 38-24, in AFC wild-card game.

Herman Edwards' regular-season record: 10-6 in one season with Jets.

Edwards' postseason record: 0-1 in one appearance with Jets.

Team record last five years: 48-32 (.600, ranks T7th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 2000.

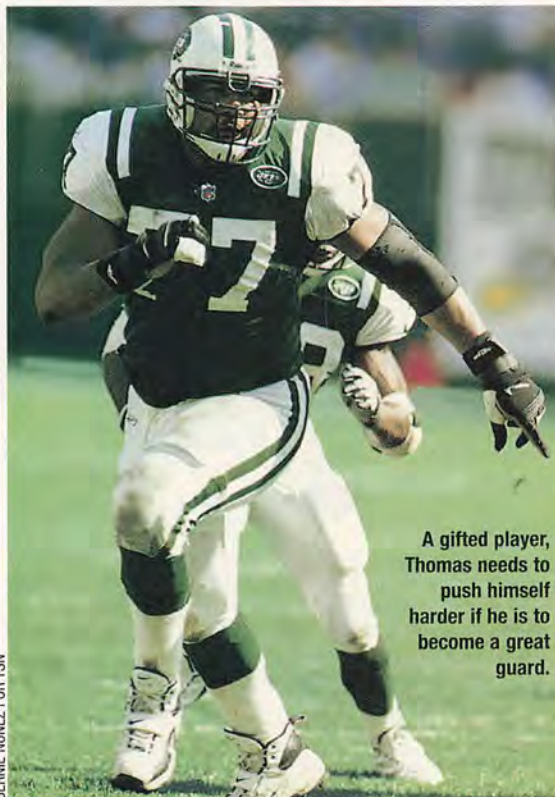
Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*299.7	14	24
Rushing offense	*128.4	2	4
Passing offense	*171.3	16	29
Scoring offense	308	10	17
Total defense	*322.1	9	19
Rushing defense	*134.6	15	28
Passing defense	*187.4	3	7
Scoring defense	295	6	12
Takeaways	39	2	T2
Giveaways	21	T1	T2
Turnover differential	18	1	1
Sacks	33	14	22
Sacks allowed	19	1	2

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Herman Edwards	Head coach	13	2
Ted Cottrell	Asst. HC/def. coord.	19	2
Paul Hackett	Offensive coordinator	15	2
Bill Bradley	Defensive backs	5	2
Rubin Carter	Defensive line	7	2
Bishop Harris	Running backs	8	2
Mike Henning	Off. asst./quality control	3	3
John Lott	Strength & conditioning	6	6
Doug Marrone	Offensive line	1	1
David Merritt	Defensive assistant	2	2
Phil Pettey	Tight ends	3	2
Eric Price	Off. asst./quality control	2	2
Jimmy Raye	Offensive specialist	26	1
Mose Rison	Wide receivers	2	2
Bob Sutton	Linebackers	3	3
Mike Westhoff	Special teams	20	2



BERNIE NUNEZ FOR TSN

A gifted player, Thomas needs to push himself harder if he is to become a great guard.

2001 season because of shoulder surgery.

Ferguson will improve the porous run defense, but he may not be a good fit in a one-gap scheme. He's a classic two-gap player, relying on power, not speed.

Newcomer Larry Webster probably will start alongside Ferguson at the 3 technique spot. Webster, 33, is beyond his best years, but he might be able to give the team 30 snaps a game on run downs. He will share time with journeyman Riddick Parker, another limited player. Perhaps rookie Alan Harper can wiggle his way into the rotation. Clearly, the tackle situation isn't ideal.

GRADE: B-

Linebackers—This could be one of the premier linebacking units in the league. It depends on Cowart, who is returning from a partly torn Achilles' tendon.

When healthy, Cowart is a tackling machine in the mold of Ray Lewis. Trouble is, he has missed 19 of the last 20 games. That didn't bother the Jets, who took him from the Bills with a six-year, \$31 million contract.

Risky? Yes, but a worthwhile risk. Cowart, reunited with former Bills coordinator Cottrell, is a difference-maker. It may take some time to reach his old form, but he will blow up many a running back along the road to full recovery. He didn't participate in the spring minicamp but should be ready for training camp.

Cowart is an ideal fit in the weakside slot, which allows the player to roam sideline-to-sideline, seeking and destroying. The departed James Farrior racked up 181 total tackles last season in that role, and he's not close to Cowart in terms of ability.

Cowart's addition should have a positive effect on the entire defense, which hasn't had a true leader since Bryan Cox left after the 2000 season.

Marvin Jones and Mo Lewis return to the middle and strong side, respectively. Jones, 30, and Lewis, 32, have lost some speed over the years, but they're smart, instinctive players who know how to get the job done. On the downside, they're both vulnerable in coverage.

The top backup is versatile James Darling, who is good enough to start for many teams. He can play all three spots and is a terrific special teams player. **GRADE: A-Secondary**—You may not recognize this group. Cornerbacks Aaron Glenn and Marcus Coleman and strong safety Victor Green are gone. They have been replaced by Donnie Abraham, Aaron Beasley and Sam Garnes. The only key holdovers are free safety Damien Robinson and nickel back Ray Mickens.

As a result of the overhaul, the secondary is bigger but slower. Edwards wanted to rebuild the unit with players who fit his cover 2 scheme. The Jets will miss Glenn's man-to-man coverage ability, but they hope to get by without a shutdown corner. They should be thankful the Colts' Marvin Harrison has moved out of their division.

Donnie Abraham is the best of the newcomers. A ball magnet who has 31 interceptions over the last six seasons, he knows the scheme, having played under Edwards in Tampa Bay.

Beasley and Garnes are coming off so-so seasons with the Jaguars and Giants, respectively. They're both smart and physical, but they could be past their best years.

The Jets need more production from Robinson, who, frankly, is lucky to have a job. He's another Edwards disciple from the Bucs, a relationship that earned him a muligan after a disappointing 2001.

Neither Robinson nor Garnes is fast, so you have to wonder about their ability to cover the field in a two-deep zone. If Robinson struggles, the Jets can turn to rookie Jon McGraw, who reminds Edwards of a young John Lynch.

The top backup is Mickens, who covers slot receivers as well as any nickel back. Cornerback Jamie Henderson and safety Nick Ferguson, both strong on special teams, will compete for the dime-back job.

GRADE: B-

SPECIAL TEAMS After suffering through a year of poor punting by Tom Tupa, Westhoff successfully recruited

REALIGNMENT reality

The Jets lucked out big-time with the move of the Colts to the AFC South. Consider these staggering numbers: Since 1987, the Jets have lost 22 of 30 games to Indianapolis. The last time the Jets beat the Colts in a big game was Super Bowl 3, after the 1968 season, and, frankly, that's not an exaggeration. When they had to face the Colts twice a season, the Jets were lucky to get a split (the Colts swept the series in 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1996 and 1999). More often than not, it seemed like the most damaging losses occurred during playoff drives, including 1998, when a 24-23 loss in Indianapolis was the Jets' only defeat in their last 11 regular-season games. Now that the Colts are gone, the Jets' chances of winning the division are better. Who wants to game-plan for Peyton Manning, Edgerrin James and Marvin Harrison twice a season?



BERNIE NUNEZ FOR TSN

The coaches vowed a year ago to reduce Martin's workload. This season, it may happen.

one of his former punters from the Dolphins, Matt Turk. This was the biggest upgrade of the offseason. Turk will have a significant impact on field position, and he also is an excellent holder.

Westhoff also is happy because Moss, who never got a chance to show his punt-returning brilliance last season, is back. He also will create better field position.

With Moss and Turk, and with solid coverage units, the Jets could have one of the better special teams units in the league. The kicker is John Hall, who sent the Jets to the playoffs with a game-winning, 53-yard field goal in the 60th minute of the 16th game. James Dearth is an adequate long snapper.

The Jets could use some sizzle on kickoff returns. The leading candidates are Morton, Jordan and Craig Yeast. **GRADE: B+**

BOTTOM LINE Despite the six new starters on defense, a return trip to the playoffs hinges on whether Edwards can squeeze more production out of the same, old quarterback (Testaverde) and the same, old offense. Another 10-6 season sounds about right.

TSN

Rich Cimini covers the Jets for the New York Daily News.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ Laveranues Coles
□ Kevin Swayne
LT ■ Kareem McKenzie
□ Jumbo Elliott

LG ■ Dave Szott
□ J.P. Machado

C ■ Kevin Mawae
□ J.P. Machado

RG ■ Randy Thomas
□ Jonathan Goodwin

RT ■ Jason Fabin
□ Dan Goodspeed

TE ■ Anthony Becht
□ Chris Baker

WR ■ Wayne Chrebet
■ Santana Moss

QB ■ Vinny Testaverde
■ Chad Pennington

RB ■ Curtis Martin
■ LaMont Jordan

FB ■ Richie Anderson
□ Jerald Sowell

Defense

LE ■ John Abraham
■ Bryan Thomas

DT □ Riddick Parker
□ Alan Harper

NT ■ Jason Ferguson
□ James Reed

RE ■ Shaun Ellis
■ Steve White

SLB ■ Mo Lewis
□ Jason Glenn

MLB ■ Marvin Jones
□ Kelvin Moses

WLB ■ Sam Cowart
■ James Darling

LCB ■ Donnie Abraham
■ Ray Mickens

RCB ■ Aaron Beasley
■ Jamie Henderson

SS ■ Sam Garnes
□ Nick Ferguson

FS ■ Damien Robinson
□ Jon McGraw

Specialists

K ■ John Hall
P ■ Matt Turk

KR ■ Chad Morton
PR ■ Santana Moss

LS ■ James Dearth

■ Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

JETS ROSTER

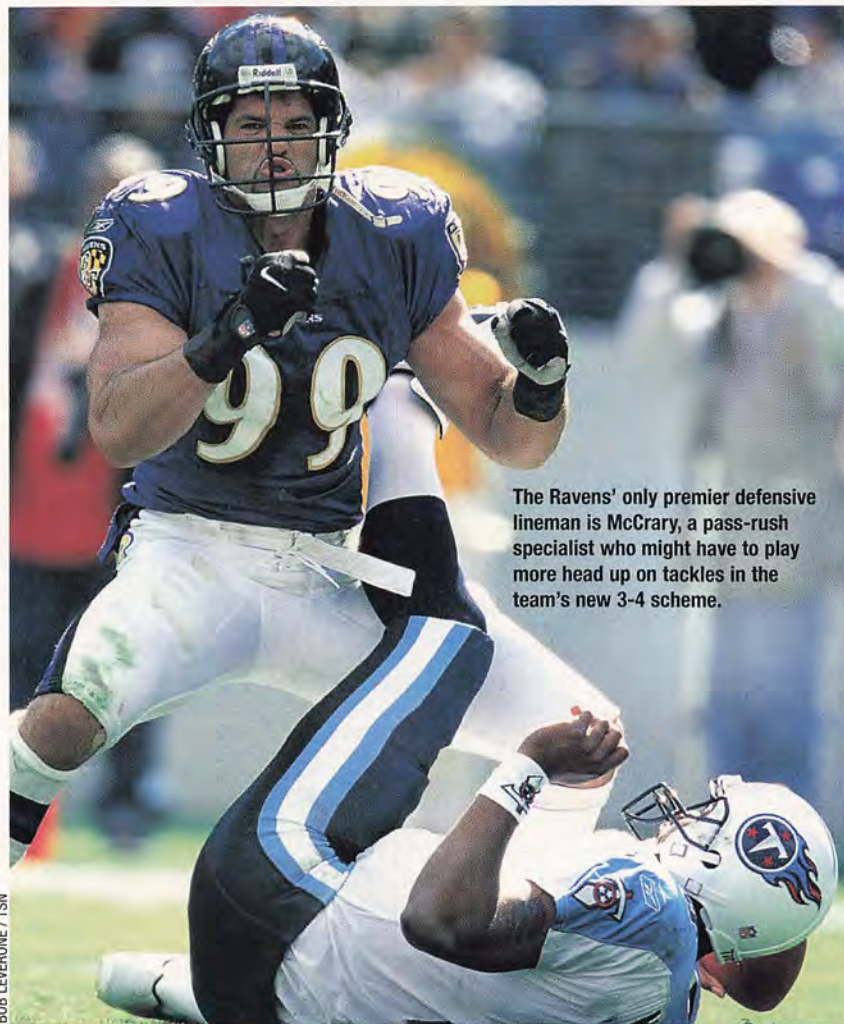
No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
10	Pennington, Chad	6-3/225	6-26-76	3	Marshall	D1c/00	2/0
16	Testaverde, Vinny	6-5/235	11-13-63	16	Miami (Fla.)	FA/98	16/16
11	Woodbury, Tory	6-2/208	7-12-78	2	Winston-Salem State	FA/01	10/0
Running backs							
20	Anderson, Richie (FB)	6-2/230	9-13-71	10	Penn State	D6/93	16/15
34	Jordan, LaMont	5-10/230	11-11-78	2	Maryland	D2/01	16/0
28	Martin, Curtis	5-11/205	5-1-73	8	Pittsburgh	FA/98	16/16
26	Morton, Chad	5-8/186	4-4-77	3	Southern California	T-N/01	9/0
33	Sowell, Jerald (FB)	6-0/237	1-21-74	6	Tulane	W-GB/97	16/0
Receivers							
81	Baker, Chris (TE)	6-3/258	11-18-79	R	Michigan State	D3/02	—
88	Becht, Anthony (TE)	6-5/272	8-8-77	3	West Virginia	D1d/00	16/15
80	Chrebet, Wayne	5-10/188	8-14-73	8	Hofstra	FA/95	15/15
87	Coles, Laveranues	5-11/196	12-29-77	3	Florida State	D3/00	16/16
85	Dearth, James (TE)	6-4/270	1-22-76	2	Tarleton State (Tex.)	FA/00	16/1
83	Moss, Santana	5-10/185	6-1-79	2	Miami (Fla.)	D1/01	5/0
82	Swayne, Kevin	6-1/191	1-17-75	2	Wayne State	FA/01	15/2
86	Wilcox, Daniel (TE)	6-1/229	3-23-77	1	Appalachian State	FA/01	1/0
84	Yeast, Craig	5-8/170	11-20-76	4	Kentucky	FA/01	11/0
Offensive linemen							
76	Elliott, Jumbo (T)	6-7/305	4-1-65	14	Michigan	UFA/96	—
69	Fabini, Jason (T)	6-7/304	8-25-74	5	Cincinnati	D4/98	16/16
65	Goodspeed, Dan (T)	6-6/300	5-20-77	1	Kent State	FA/01	1/0
78	Goodwin, Jonathan	6-3/318	12-2-78	R	Michigan	D5/02	—
63	Machado, J.P. (C/G)	6-4/300	1-6-76	4	Illinois	D6b/99	16/3
68	Mawae, Kevin (C)	6-4/289	1-23-71	9	Louisiana State	UFA/98	16/16
67	McKenzie, Kareem (T)	6-6/327	5-24-79	2	Penn State	D3/01	8/0
79	Szott, Dave (G)	6-4/289	12-12-67	13	Penn State	UFA/02	16/16
77	Thomas, Randy (G)	6-4/301	1-19-76	4	Mississippi State	D2/99	13/13
Defensive linemen							
94	Abraham, John (E)	6-4/256	5-6-78	3	South Carolina	D1b/00	16/15
92	Ellis, Shaun (T)	6-5/294	6-24-77	3	Tennessee	D1a/00	16/15
72	Ferguson, Jason (T)	6-3/305	11-28-74	6	Georgia	D7b/97	—
96	Harper, Alan (T)	6-1/285	9-6-79	R	Fresno State	D4/02	—
97	Parker, Riddick	6-3/295	11-20-72	6	North Carolina	UFA/01	13/0
93	Reed, James (T)	6-0/286	2-3-77	2	Iowa State	D7a/01	16/2
91	Thomas, Bryan (E)	6-4/266	6-7-79	R	Alabama-Birmingham	D1/02	—
75	Webster, Larry (T)	6-5/315	1-18-69	10	Maryland	FA/02	15/0
95	White, Steve (E)	6-2/271	10-25-73	7	Tennessee	UFA/02	16/1
Linebackers							
56	Cowart, Sam	6-2/245	2-26-75	5	Florida State	UFA/02	1/1
51	Darling, James	6-0/250	12-29-74	6	Washington State	UFA/01	16/0
58	Glenn, Jason	6-0/231	8-20-79	2	Texas A&M	W-Det/01	15/0
55	Jones, Marvin	6-2/244	6-28-72	10	Florida State	D1/93	16/16
57	Lewis, Mo	6-3/258	10-21-69	12	Georgia	D3/91	16/16
50	Moses, Kelvin	6-0/239	9-3-76	2	Wake Forest	FA/00	16/0
Defensive backs							
29	Abraham, Donnie (CB)	5-10/192	10-8-73	7	East Tennessee State	FA/02	15/5
21	Beasley, Aaron (CB)	6-0/205	7-7-73	7	West Virginia	FA/02	12/12
25	Ferguson, Nick (S)	5-11/201	11-27-73	3	Georgia Tech	FA/00	16/1
42	Games, Sam (S)	6-3/225	7-12-74	6	Cincinnati	UFA/02	16/16
23	Henderson, Jamie (CB)	6-2/202	1-1-79	2	Georgia	D4/01	16/0
38	McGraw, Jon (S)	6-3/206	4-2-79	R	Kansas State	D2/02	—
24	Mickens, Ray (CB)	5-8/180	1-4-73	7	Texas A&M	D3/96	16/4
22	Robinson, Damien (S)	6-2/223	12-23-73	6	Iowa	UFA/01	14/14
27	Scott, Tony (CB)	5-10/193	10-3-76	3	North Carolina State	D6/00	7/0
Specialists							
9	Hall, John (K)	6-3/228	3-17-74	6	Wisconsin	FA/97	16/0
1	Turk, Matt (P)	6-5/250	6-6-68	8	Wis.-Whitewater	T-Was/00	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: LS James Dearth, DE John Frank, CB Todd Franz.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Ravens



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

The Ravens' only premier defensive lineman is McCrary, a pass-rush specialist who might have to play more head up on tackles in the team's new 3-4 scheme.

BY MIKE PRESTON

The kiddie corps era is under way in Baltimore.

The Ravens, a dominant, veteran team the last two seasons that had a superb defense and won the Super Bowl after the 2000 season, enter a rebuilding mode using a lot of draft picks. They simply are the latest salary-cap casualty in the NFL.

The club had to part with such high-salaried players as tight end Shannon Sharpe, defensive tackle Sam Adams, safety Rod Woodson, cornerback Duane Starks, outside linebacker Jamie Sharper and wide receiver/returner Jermaine Lewis.

The new cast includes second-year starters such as tight end Todd Heap, guard Bennie Anderson, linebacker Ed Hartwell and cornerback Gary Baxter and rookies such as safety Ed Reed, defensive tackle Anthony Weaver and punter Dave Zastudil.

Because of the cap problems, the Ravens

weren't very active in the free-agent market, which means they'll have a lot of blue-light specials, or scrap-heap players, in the lineup.

Brian Billick walked into a nice situation when he became Baltimore's head coach in 1999 because most of his defensive players were either experienced or close to breakout seasons.

Now the Ravens are back in Pampers. "The biggest thing I have to do is to recognize the maturity of the team is vastly different," Billick says. "The good thing is that we have a core group of veterans who can take the mantle. The coaching staff, myself in particular, has to constantly teach these guys."

The nucleus includes veterans such as linebackers Ray Lewis and Peter Boulware, defensive end Michael McCrary, offensive tackle Jonathan Ogden and cornerback Chris McAlister.

"If we work hard, it will become conta-

gious," McCrary says. "There is a core group left behind that has a strong work ethic, and we understand what it takes to win. Everyone is counting us out, but that's what makes this situation so challenging. I'm excited."

COACHING Strategies—The Ravens will sport a new look and probably a new philosophy on defense. Gone is the gap-control, blitzing formula that was used in the 4-3 scheme. Replacing it will be a 3-4 alignment that will use more of a read-and-react style.

New defensive coordinator Mike Nolan always has liked the 3-4, but it became a necessity because the Ravens were short on linemen.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	at Carolina	1:00	Nov. 10	CINCINNATI	1:00
Sept. 15	TAMPA BAY	1:00	Nov. 17	at Miami	1:00
Sept. 22	Open date		Nov. 24	TENNESSEE	1:00
Sept. 30	DENVER (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 1	at Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 6	at Cleveland	8:30	Dec. 8	NEW ORLEANS	4:05
Oct. 13	at Indianapolis	1:00	Dec. 15	at Houston	1:00
Oct. 20	JACKSONVILLE	1:00	Dec. 22	CLEVELAND	4:15
Oct. 27	PITTSBURGH	1:00	Dec. 29	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 3	at Atlanta	1:00	Strength of schedule: 27th		

In the past, the Ravens could blitz a lot because they had outstanding cornerbacks and pass rushers. They did a good job of recognizing formations and reading down, distance and keys. But with the turnover on defense, the defense will be quite vanilla early in the season. Gambling will be held to a minimum.

On offense, the West Coast scheme run by Billick and coordinator Matt Cavanaugh will remain in place. The Ravens will try to find balance because they don't want to put a lot of pressure on third-year quarterback Chris Redman, who hasn't started an NFL game. The strength of the offense could be the line, which returns four starters from a year ago.

Style—If you want to rebuild a team, there is no better coach than Billick. He has his weaknesses, but he is a master at finding the pulse of a team.

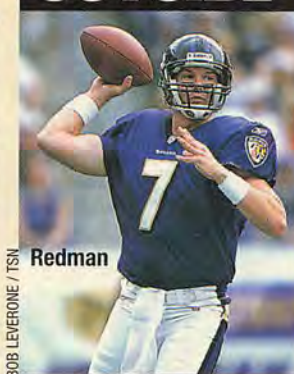
Billick isn't just a coach; he's a teacher, at times paying excessive attention to detail. He understands the psychological makeup of his players and knows the right buttons to push. He is not a screamer and doesn't have an in-your-face style, but he is direct and a players coach.

He rarely criticizes a player in public. His style is tailor-made for the young Ravens. "I have to be more tolerant because some guys can't handle that tough talk; they don't respond to it," Billick says. "If I get after some of these young guys, embarrass them on the field, then I'll have to very quickly follow up with them going off the field or in a meeting. I'll put a warm-and-fuzzy arm around them and tell the kid it's nothing personal, but this is the point I'm trying to

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

With their quarterback situation, they're going to have to run the ball. **Chris Redman** is a pocket passer; he's not very mobile. I'm sure he'll be able to make throws in the short passing game, but I don't know if he has the great downfield arm. **Jeff Blake** is streaky. His height kind of hurts him—he's only about 6 feet—because I don't think he's able to find receivers as quick. It's probably up for a battle in camp. ... Losing those two 330-pound guys in the middle of the defensive line, (**Tony Siragusa** and (**Sam**) **Adams**, is going to hurt. They covered **Ray Lewis** up, and he could run to the ball basically untouched. Going to a 3-4 scheme, they're going to have to have three big guys to help protect him. ... If **Jamal Lewis** comes back

OUTSIDE



Redman

VIEW

THE RAVENS

100 percent, you're looking at a 1,300- to 1,400-yard rusher. And if you can run the ball like that, with the way they play defense, they have a chance to be pretty decent. ... I think their offensive line is a little underrated. You've got a great one at left tackle in **Jonathan Ogden**. **Edwin Mulitalo** and **Bennie Anderson** are real solid at guard. They need a right tackle. That's probably the biggest question on their offensive line. ... The tight end is usually the quarterback's best friend, and **Todd Heap** should help, this being his second year. They definitely need (wide receiver) **Travis Taylor** to take the next step and play like a first-round pick. If he does well and Heap improves, their passing game should not be bad.

get across, that it's all part of being professional."

The Ravens lost defensive coordinator Marvin Lewis to the Redskins and linebackers coach Jack Del Rio to the Panthers. Secondary coach Steve Shafer retired. The turnover in the coaching staff couldn't have happened at a better time because it coincides with all the personnel changes.

Nolan's style is similar to Billick's; he's more of a teacher than a coach. Most of the offensive staff remains the same. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE **Quarterbacks**—The team is putting most of its faith in Redman and hopes he'll become the offensive centerpiece of the future.

The Ravens like his savvy and arm

strength. His father was his high school coach, and Redman seems to pick things up quickly. He can efficiently hit receivers on most routes but lacks mobility.

Billick says the job is Redman's to lose, but as insurance, the club signed Jeff Blake. Aside from experience, agility separates Blake from Redman. Blake, 31, can make plays out of the pocket. He has put up solid numbers in his career—his touchdown-to-interception ratio is 106-72—despite having played on some poor teams. It's not another ideal situation in Baltimore.

The team drafted Stephen F. Austin's Wes Pate in the seventh round. Pate was hampered by a knee injury that limited his mobility last season. It's unlikely he'll get a chance to play this season. If Blake and Redman aren't successful or suffer injuries, Billick probably will bring back Randall Cunningham, who was on the roster in 2001. **GRADE: C-**

Running backs—Ideally, the Ravens would like for Jamal Lewis to carry the bulk of the load, much as he did in his rookie season, when he gained 1,364 yards and the team had one of the best ball-control offenses in the league.

But Lewis didn't play a down last season after suffering a knee injury in training camp that required reconstructive surgery. It's unlikely he'll be 100 percent because most major knee injuries require two years to fully heal.

Denver's Terrell Davis and Atlanta's

Jamal Anderson have not had the same impact since having similar surgeries.

Before the injury, Lewis had the rare blend of speed and power. He was nearly unstoppable in goal-line situations, and defenses had to respect his speed on the perimeter. If he can regain such form, it would take a lot of pressure off the offense—Redman, in particular.

Jason Brookins is expected to back up Lewis. He doesn't have Lewis' speed but runs

with similar power. Brookins has had problems learning the offense and won't help the offense much beyond a running role. The Ravens believe they might have a sleeper in Chester Taylor, a rookie from Toledo who rushed for 1,430 yards last season.

At fullback, the Ravens will start second-year player Alan Ricard, who played only on special teams last season. **GRADE: D+**

Receivers—The Ravens lost two of their most productive receivers. Qadry Ismail signed with the Colts, and Sharpe rejoined the Broncos.

The club needs wide receivers Brandon Stokley and Travis Taylor to step forward. It's a risky move to rely so heavily on them, but the Ravens can do little else because of the salary-cap problems.

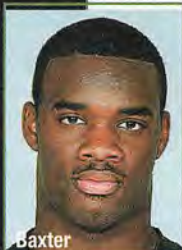
The team doesn't have a receiver with outstanding speed, so it will have to play ball control and use more short-to-intermediate patterns.

Taylor, a first-round pick in 2000, started off strong last season. But he wasn't involved in the offense late in the season, finishing with 42 catches for 560 yards. He was billed as a go-to receiver coming out of the draft, and he'll get a chance to prove it this year.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Jeff Blake eventually will become the starting quarterback. Even though coach Brian Billick has backed Chris Redman, they never have seemed to hit it off.
2. Gary Baxter will struggle in his attempt to move from safety to cornerback. Baxter is a good athlete but is slow coming out of his backpedal.
3. LB Ray Lewis' number of tackles will decrease. In the team's new 3-4 alignment, Lewis will encounter more one-on-one shots from guards.
4. Leadership will be a major problem, especially on offense. LT Jonathan Ogden leads on the field, but the Ravens don't have anyone on offense with a dynamic personality.
5. Return specialist Lamont Brightful will be effective. He reminds the Ravens of Jermaine Lewis—not just in size but in moves and breakaway ability.



Baxter

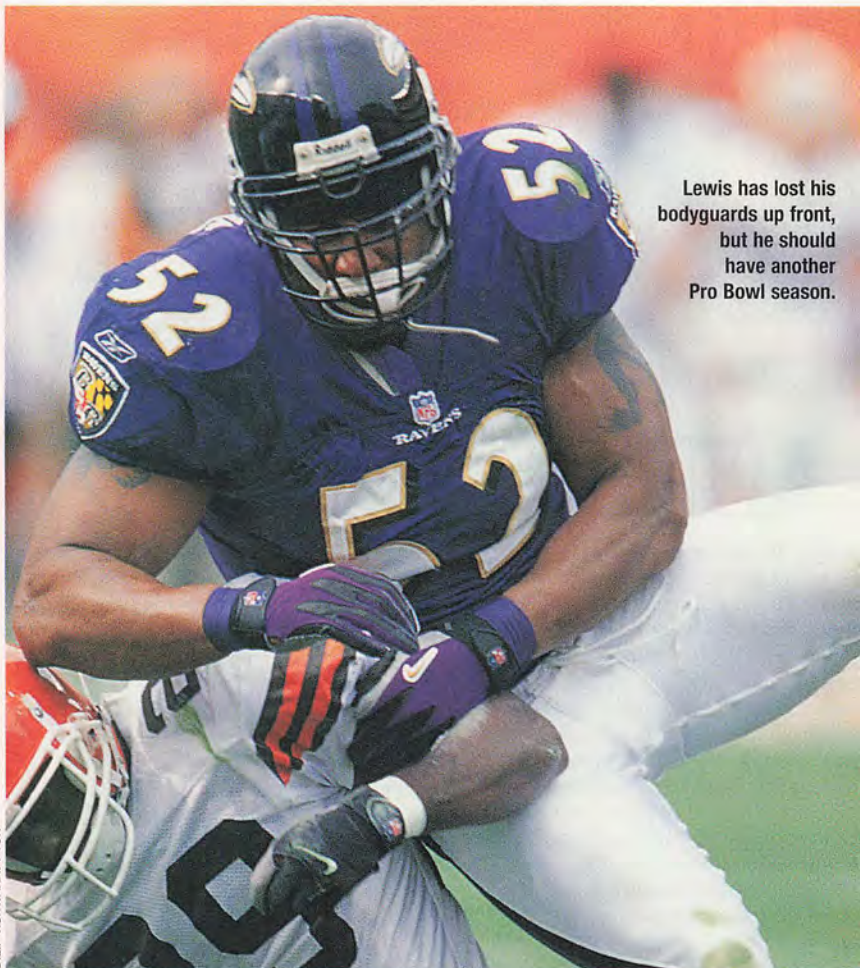
2001 results

Sept. 9	CHICAGO	W	17-6
Sept. 23	at Cincinnati	L	10-21
Sept. 30	at Denver	W	20-13
Oct. 7	TENNESSEE	W	26-7
Oct. 14	at Green Bay	L	23-31
Oct. 21	at Cleveland	L	14-24
Oct. 28	JACKSONVILLE	W	18-17
Nov. 4	at Pittsburgh	W	13-10
Nov. 12	at Tennessee	W	16-10
Nov. 18	CLEVELAND	L	17-27
Nov. 25	at Jacksonville	W	24-21
Dec. 2	INDIANAPOLIS	W	39-27
Dec. 9	Open date		
Dec. 16	PITTSBURGH	L	21-26
Dec. 23	CINCINNATI	W	16-0
Dec. 29	at Tampa Bay	L	10-22
Jan. 7	MINNESOTA	W	19-3
Jan. 13	at Miami*	W	20-3
Jan. 20	at Pittsburgh*	L	10-27

*AFC playoff game.

sportsbook.com

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Lewis has lost his bodyguards up front, but he should have another Pro Bowl season.

He has good hands and runs solid routes, and the team has to find a way to get him the ball more.

Stokley is entering his fourth season and has experienced peaks and valleys. He finished 2000 strong but was used sparingly last year. He made tough catches but dropped easy ones, indicating a problem

with concentration. Stokley is a better inside receiver than outside because he doesn't have the strength or speed to beat the top two corners on most teams. He does have a knack for finding the dead areas of zones.

The Ravens selected Ron Johnson in the fourth round, and he gives them some size at 6-2, 225. He has good quickness in a short

area and is effective on fades and quick outs. He could become a factor in the red zone. Like Stokley and Taylor, however, he lacks speed. Sixth-round pick Javin Hunter has good speed but is raw.

Heap spent a year learning the tight end position under Sharpe. He still needs to improve his blocking, but Heap runs good patterns and has excellent hands. He also has the speed to get deep down the middle. Look for fifth-round pick Terry Jones to get some playing time in running situations.

GRADE: D

Line—This was a weakness last season but should be improved in 2002. The Ravens return four starters and also have a lot of depth. Left tackle Jonathan Ogden still is one of the best in the league. He is a technician; his long arms and torso provide great leverage. He is amazingly quick for his size, but his primary asset is that he seldom gets off-balance.

Left guard Edwin Mulitalo has been nagged by injuries throughout his career. This should be a breakout season for Mulitalo, who is better at run blocking than pass blocking. He has good initial quickness but is robotic and tends to get too high in short-yardage blocking.

Mike Flynn started last season slowly while making the transition from guard to center. He doesn't have great athletic ability but has a strong work ethic and is a self-made player. He's also quick and has decent speed.

The Ravens are suspect on the right side, but they'll be in better shape than a year ago. Right guard Anderson performed reasonably well as a rookie and should make significant progress after an offseason in the weight room. Anderson is a mauler but also has enough finesse to become solid in pass protection. Second-year player Jason Thomas will start at right tackle, and that will be a problem area. He has no experience and no major assets. Defenses will attack him.

Casey Rabach provides depth. The Ravens didn't use him in any games last season, but he impressed the coaching staff with his athletic ability. He can play center and guard.

GRADE: C

DEFENSE Line—The Ravens don't have much experience or bulk in this area. This talent pool was depleted by the retirement of tackle Tony Siragusa and the loss of free agents Adams and Larry Webster. The team also waived starting defensive end Rob Burnett.

In the 3-4, the club won't need as many linemen. Nonetheless, it will struggle to put together a competent line.

The only high-quality player is McCrary. He was a two-time Pro Bowl player as the right end in Marvin Lewis' 4-3 defense, but in the 3-4, McCrary will have to play more head up on the tackle or tight end. He won't have as much freedom to stay outside, and

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-24	Ed Reed	S	Miami (Fla.)	Can defend the pass or the run and loves to hit. What's not to like?
2-52	Anthony Weaver	DT	Notre Dame	Productive four-year college player expected to start right away.
4-112	Dave Zastudil	P	Ohio University	With no competition in camp, he'll be the punter from Day 1.
4-123	Ron Johnson	WR	Minnesota	Some question his speed, but he could capture No. 3 WR spot.
5-155	Terry Jones	TE	Alabama	Fourth TE on a roster that includes Heap, last year's No. 1 pick.
6-195	Lamont Brightful	WR	E. Washington	Has potential as a WR; he'll contribute as a returner this season.
6-206	Javin Hunter	WR	Notre Dame	Has good speed but relies more on moves and savvy to get open.
6-207	Chester Taylor	RB	Toledo	Has a shot at third RB spot, but he'll have competition in camp.
6-209	Chad Williams	DB	Southern Miss.	Lacks size and bulk but has good speed and a nose for the ball.
7-236	Wes Pate	QB	Stephen F. Austin	In the running for the third QB spot.

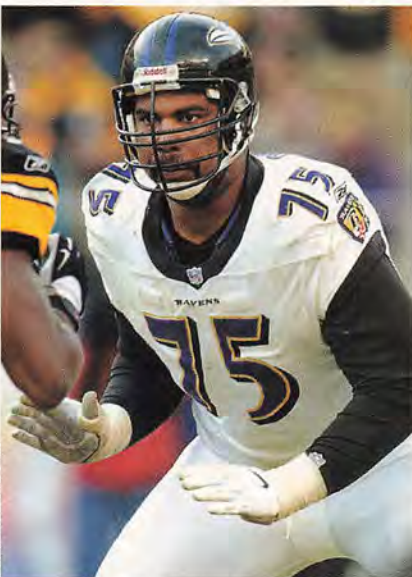
Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-4	Peter Boulware	LB	Florida State	Starter with Ravens
'98-10	Duane Starks	CB	Miami (Fla.)	Starter with Cardinals
'99-10	Chris McAllister	CB	Arizona	Starter with Ravens
'00-5	Jamal Lewis	RB	Tennessee	Starter with Ravens
'00-10	Travis Taylor	WR	Florida	Starter with Ravens
'01-31	Todd Heap	TE	Arizona State	Starter with Ravens

his body could take more punishment.

McCrary has had four major knee surgeries during his career, including one that caused him to miss the last six games of 2001. He usually plays at 250 pounds, which is too light for a 3-4 end. But the club might decide to use McCrary more as a pass-rush specialist allowing him to split time with Marques Douglas, whose experience is limited.

The Ravens might have one of the lightest starting lines in the league. Kelly Gregg (6-0, 285 pounds) will start at nose tackle, and he'll have problems holding up at the position. He especially lacks bulk in the lower half of his body. Gregg puts in plenty of effort, but he's more of a stopgap player than a starter.



Amazingly quick for his size, Ogden has become one of the NFL's premier left tackles.

Second-round pick Anthony Weaver will start at left end. He is heavier than the other starters (300 pounds), but he will have problems matching the strength of NFL tackles. Weaver is a fine prospect but needs a year or two to develop. Unfortunately, he won't get that with the Ravens. **GRADE: D**

Linebackers—This position will have to carry the defense. Lewis is the best middle linebacker in the game, and Boulware is one of the best pass rushers. Boulware is a good fit as an outside linebacker in the 3-4 scheme.

Despite his reckless style, Lewis hasn't slowed down. He is physical enough to take on blockers and runs sideline to sideline extremely well. Unlike many linebackers, Lewis stays on the field for passing downs. Lewis no longer has Adams and Siragusa in front of him to take on blockers, but he'll have another Pro Bowl season in his new role as a 3-4 inside linebacker.

Boulware finished with 15 sacks last season, second in the NFL. He has great quickness—in particular, a strong first step. He has good hands, and his speed doesn't allow

blockers to get into his body. Boulware, though, still needs a power move to complement his spin and other moves. The club hopes Boulware and Lewis also will provide leadership.

Hartwell, a second-year player, is expected to join Lewis inside. Hartwell is quick and runs well but needs to add muscle to last an entire season. He played well on special teams last season, especially at the end of the year.

The other outside position will be filled by former end Adalius Thomas. He's massive (6-2, 270) for an outside linebacker, but the club believes he has enough athletic ability to make the transition, especially with Thomas' background as a college basketball player. Thomas is a quick learner, but there will be times when offenses isolate him in the passing game and beat him. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—The Ravens have one good player in the starting unit, but others have great potential. The top player is McAlister, a former first-round pick with size, speed and great instincts.

He can play zone, but his forte is press coverage. He has the ability to knock receivers off their routes at the line, then run with them. If he misses a jam, McAlister has great closing speed. Few teams challenged him last season, and fewer will this year—especially with Baxter on the other side.

Baxter will replace Starks, who signed with Arizona, and is sure to have problems. He played safety and corner in college but might be a step slow to play corner in the NFL. The Ravens will take their chances with him because they don't have anyone else who has credentials.

The club made Reed its first-round pick, and it's easy to see why. He's an excellent athlete and very smooth. He'll make a lot of plays this season as a starting safety. He seems to be a natural leader—much like a another former University of Miami player, Ray Lewis.

Because the Ravens lost both of their top safeties—Woodson and Corey Harris—as free agents, Reed won't be the only starting safety with little experience. Anthony Mitchell, who joined the club in 1999, will start at the other safety spot. The Ravens don't have a strong and weak safety; they use them on the left and right. Mitchell, who is more of a thumper than Reed, is another young player with potential. By midseason, this group should be playing a lot better. **GRADE: C-**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Ravens have some solid specialists, even though some of them lack experience. Kicker Matt Stover has been one of the team's most consistent performers the last two years, though it would like him to improve the distance on his kickoffs.

If he can't, the Ravens will take a long look at Zastudil, the punter who was drafted in the fourth round, also as a kickoff spe-

Moves

Key additions

QB Jeff Blake
Key losses
DT Sam Adams
RB Terry Allen
DE Rob Burnett
QB Randall Cunningham
DT Lionel Dalton
FB Sam Gash
QB Elvis Grbac
S Corey Harris
WR Qadry Ismail
LB Brad Jackson
WR Patrick Johnson
WR Jermaine Lewis
G Leon Searcy
TE Shannon Sharpe
LB Jamie Sharper
DT Tony Siragusa
CB Duane Starks
OL Kipp Vickers
DT Larry Webster
S Rod Woodson

Free agent/Saints
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent/Broncos
Free agent
Retired
Free agent/Lions
Free agent/Colts
Free agent/Panthers
Free agent/Jaguars
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Dolphins
Free agent/Broncos
Expansion draft/Texans
Retired
Free agent/Cardinals
Free agent
Free agent/Jets
Free agent/Raiders

Stadium/Media

Ravens Stadium (69,084, grass).
Ticket information: 410-261-RAVE (7283).
Training site: Western Maryland College, Westminster, Md., 410-654-6200.
Radio: WJFK-AM (1300) & WQSR-FM (105.7).
Website: www.baltimore Ravens.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 10-6 (2nd in AFC Central); 6-4 in division; 8-4 in conference; 2-2 vs. NFC; 6-2 at home; 4-4 on road; 0-0 on artificial turf; 10-6 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Defeated Miami, 20-3, in AFC wild-card game; lost to Pittsburgh, 27-10, in AFC semifinal game.

Brian Billick's regular-season record: 30-18 in three seasons with Ravens.

Billick's postseason record: 5-1 in two appearances with Ravens (1-0 in Super Bowl).

Team record last five years: 42-37-1 (.531, ranks 14th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*320.3	8	14
Rushing offense	*113.1	7	11
Passing offense	*207.1	7	16
Scoring offense	303	11	18
Total defense	*277.9	2	2
Rushing defense	*88.2	2	4
Passing defense	*189.7	4	8
Scoring defense	265	2	4
Takeaways	28	T6	T16
Giveaways	36	13	25
Turnover differential	-8	12	23
Sacks	45	3	T7
Sacks allowed	40	9	T17

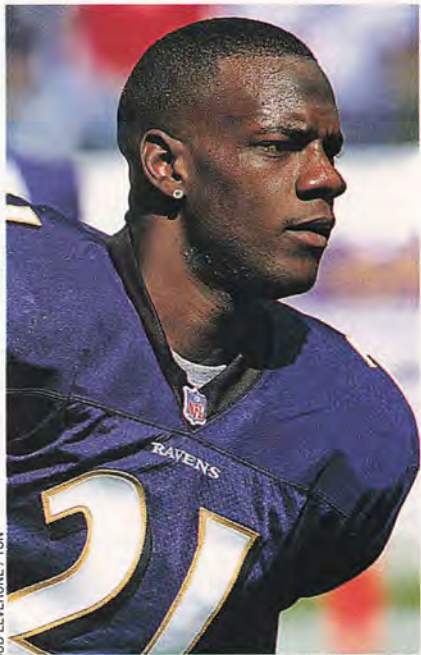
*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Brian Billick	Head coach	11	4
Matt Cavanaugh	Offensive coordinator	9	4
Mike Nolan	Defensive coordinator	16	2
Mike Asanovich	Asst. strength & condit.	8	1
Jim Colletto	Offensive line	4	4
Jeff Friday	Strength & conditioning	7	4
Wade Harman	Tight ends	6	4
Donnie Henderson	Secondary	4	4
Paul Ricci	Asst. strength & condit.	1	1
Rex Ryan	Defensive line	6	4
David Shaw	Quarterbacks/receivers	6	1
Matt Simon	Running backs	5	4
Mike Smith	Linebackers	4	4
Bennie Thompson	Assistant special teams	3	3
Phil Zacharias	Def. asst./def. line	1	1
Gary Zauner	Special teams	9	1

REALIGNMENT reality

Although the old division was broken up with the departure of Tennessee and Jacksonville to the AFC South, the schedule doesn't look that much different. That's because the Ravens will play both the Titans and Jaguars one time this season. And the Ravens probably are pleased because they have defeated Jacksonville four straight times and Tennessee five out of six. Then again, that was before Baltimore's roster was stripped. Unfortunately for the Ravens, their opponents in the AFC North—the Bengals, Browns and Steelers—are on the rise as Baltimore rebuilds. All three divisional foes are trying to use the same formula the Ravens applied on their way to a Super Bowl win. All three have good speed and talent on defense, and now each has a big-time running back. They all apparently will seek to control the clock with the running game. Baltimore, meanwhile, has gone from a leading role to a catch-up position.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

McAlister can knock receivers off their routes at the line, then run downfield with them.

cialist. However, he didn't kick off much in college.

The Ravens left one of the game's best returners, Jermaine Lewis, unprotected in the expansion draft, and the Texans chose him. But receiver Lamont Brightful, a sixth-round pick, reminds the club of Lewis. Brightful is small but explosive. The Ravens are in need of kick-coverage guys and lack veterans to fill in on the special teams. A great coaching job will be needed for this unit to be successful. **GRADE: C-**

BOTTOM LINE The Ravens spent heavily toward trying to win a second Super Bowl last season and are paying the price for it now. This team is in at least a two-year transition period. If it finishes .500 this season, Billick should be voted coach of the year. The team's progress should be measured against the big picture, not in terms of victories and defeats.

TSN

Mike Preston covers the Ravens for the Baltimore Sun.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	□ Brandon Stokley
	□ Kenyon Hambrick
LT	● Jonathan Ogden
	□ Dawani Fladger
LG	■ Edwin Mulitalo
	□ Casey Rabach
C	■ Mike Flynn
	□ Casey Rabach
RG	■ Bennie Anderson
	□ Jim Walker
RT	□ Jason Thomas
	□ Dawani Fladger
TE	■ Todd Heap
	□ John Jones
WR	■ Travis Taylor
	□ Ron Johnson
QB	□ Chris Redman
	■ Jeff Blake
RB	■ Jamal Lewis
	□ Jason Brookins
FB	□ Alan Ricard
	□ Morgan Kane

Defense

DE	● Michael McCrary
	□ Marques Douglas
NG	□ Kelly Gregg
	□ Ma'ake Kemoeatu
DE	■ Anthony Weaver
	□ Josh McKibben
OLB	● Peter Boulware
	□ Shannon Taylor
ILB	● Ray Lewis
	□ Bart Scott
ILB	□ Ed Hartwell
	□ Rod Taylor
OLB	■ Adalius Thomas
	□ Gary Davis
LCB	□ Gary Baxter
	□ Reggie Waddell
RCB	● Chris McAlister
	□ Alvin Porter
SS	■ Ed Reed
	□ Chad Williams
FS	□ Anthony Mitchell
	□ Will Demps

Specialists

K	● Matt Stover
P	□ Dave Zastudil
KR	□ Lamont Brightful
PR	□ Lamont Brightful
LS	□ Joe Maese
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

RAVENS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
11	Blake, Jeff	6-0/210	12-4-70	11	East Carolina	FA/02	1/0
12	Pate, Wes	6-2/228	3-24-79	R	Stephen F. Austin	D7/02	—
7	Redman, Chris	6-3/223	7-7-77	3	Louisville	D3/00	0/0
Running backs							
44	Brookins, Jason	6-0/235	1-5-76	2	Lane	FA/01	12/3
34	Kane, Morgan (FB)	6-0/221	3-30-76	1	Wake Forest	FA/02	0/0
31	Lewis, Jamal	5-11/231	8-28-79	3	Tennessee	D1a/00	—
39	Ricard, Alan (FB)	5-11/237	1-17-77	2	Northeast Louisiana	FA/00	5/0
29	Taylor, Chester	5-11/213	9-22-79	R	Toledo	D6c/02	—
Receivers							
45	Brightful, Lamont	5-10/170	1-29-79	R	Eastern Washington	D6a/02	—
81	Hambrick, Kenyon	6-0/190	5-2-78	1	Alabama A&M	FA/02	0/0
86	Heap, Todd (TE)	6-5/252	3-16-80	2	Arizona State	D1/01	12/6
84	Hunter, Javin	5-11/190	5-9-80	R	Notre Dame	D6b/02	—
83	Johnson, Ron	6-2/225	5-23-80	R	Minnesota	D4b/02	—
88	Jones, John (TE)	6-4/255	4-4-75	3	Indiana (Pa.)	FA/00	15/2
82	Jones, Terry (TE)	6-3/265	12-3-79	R	Alabama	D5/02	—
80	Stokley, Brandon	5-11/197	6-23-76	4	SW Louisiana	D4a/99	16/5
89	Taylor, Travis	6-1/200	3-30-79	3	Florida	D1b/00	16/13
Offensive linemen							
66	Anderson, Bennie (G)	6-5/305	2-17-77	2	Tennessee State	FA/01	16/13
76	Fladger, Dawani (T)	6-4/310	5-23-78	R	South Carolina St.	FA/02	—
62	Flynn, Mike (C)	6-3/300	6-15-74	5	Maine	FA/97	16/16
59	Maese, Joe (C)	6-0/241	12-2-78	2	New Mexico	D6/01	15/0
64	Mulitalo, Edwin (G)	6-3/340	9-1-74	4	Arizona	D4b/99	14/14
75	Ogden, Jonathan (T)	6-8/340	7-31-74	7	UCLA	D1a/96	16/16
61	Rabach, Casey (C-G)	6-4/301	9-24-77	2	Wisconsin	D3/01	0/0
65	Thomas, Jason (T)	6-3/300	6-10-77	2	Hampton	D7/00	0/0
	Walker, Jim (G)	6-3/292	5-1-76	R	Utah State	FA/02	—
Defensive linemen							
94	Douglas, Marques (E)	6-2/270	3-5-77	4	Howard	W-NO/01	2/0
97	Gregg, Kelly (T)	6-0/285	11-1-76	4	Oklahoma	FA/00	8/1
92	Kemoeatu, Ma'ake (T)	6-5/312	1-10-79	R	Utah	FA/02	—
99	McCrary, Michael (E)	6-4/260	7-7-70	10	Wake Forest	UFA/97	10/10
	McKibben, Josh (T)	6-2/285	12-14-78	R	Central Florida	FA/02	—
98	Weaver, Anthony (E)	6-3/300	7-28-80	R	Notre Dame	D2/02	—
Linebackers							
58	Boulware, Peter	6-4/255	12-18-74	6	Florida State	D1/97	16/14
	Davis, Gary	6-0/230	5-17-79	R	New Mexico	FA/02	—
56	Hartwell, Ed	6-1/250	5-27-78	2	Western Illinois	D4/01	16/0
52	Lewis, Ray	6-1/245	5-15-75	7	Miami (Fla.)	D1b/96	16/16
	Scott, Bart	6-2/235	8-18-80	R	Southern Illinois	FA/02	—
	Taylor, Rod	6-0/257	1-28-79	R	Ala.-Birmingham	FA/02	—
54	Taylor, Shannon	6-3/247	2-16-75	3	Virginia	D6a/00	11/0
96	Thomas, Adalius	6-2/270	8-17-77	3	Southern Mississippi	D6a/00	16/3
Defensive backs							
28	Baxter, Gary (CB)	6-2/204	11-24-78	2	Baylor	D2/01	6/0
	Demps, Will (S)	5-11/210	11-7-79	R	San Diego State	FA/02	—
21	McAlister, Chris (CB)	6-1/206	6-14-77	4	Arizona	D1/99	16/16
42	Mitchell, Anthony (S)	6-1/211	12-13-74	3	Tuskegee	FA/99	16/0
24	Porter, Alvin	5-11/175	5-10-77	2	Oklahoma State	FA/01	16/0
20	Reed, Ed (S)	5-11/205	9-11-78	R	Miami (Fla.)	D1/02	—
27	Waddell, Reggie	6-0/185	11-14-77	1	Western Illinois	FA/01	1/0
49	Williams, Chad (S)	5-9/207	1-22-79	R	Southern Mississippi	D6d/02	—
Specialists							
3	Stover, Matt (K)	5-11/178	1-27-68	13	Louisiana Tech	PlanB/91	16/0
19	Zastudil, Dave (P)	6-3/225	10-26-78	R	Ohio University	D4a/02	—

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Bengals

BY CHICK LUDWIG

Cincinnati is home to the longest-running joke in the National Football League. But nobody in the Queen City is laughing.

Since the Bengals last made the playoffs, in 1990, it has been 11 years up and 11 years down for the once-proud franchise that reached the Super Bowl twice in the 1980s.

Eleven long, lost, lonely years filled with eight double-digit losing seasons, a 53-123 record and a .301 winning percentage.

"We've waited long enough," team president Mike Brown says.

With some secondary help for the league's ninth-ranked defense (based upon total yards), a first-round pick in left tackle Levi Jones to stabilize the offensive line, a Pro Bowl tailback in Corey Dillon and an array of fleet receivers, the Bengals could make a run at the playoffs if they can get some consistent play at quarterback. That's a big if.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

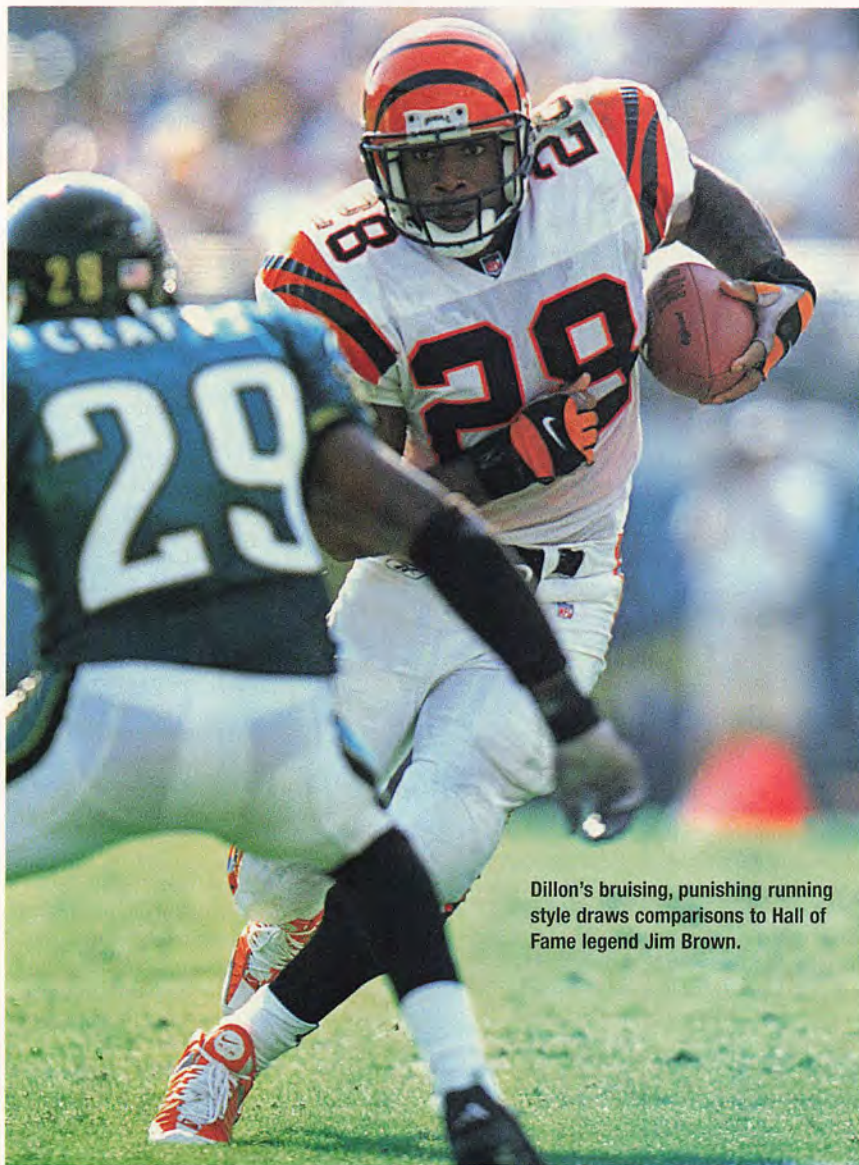
Sept. 8	SAN DIEGO	1:00	Nov. 10	at Baltimore	1:00
Sept. 15	at Cleveland	1:00	Nov. 17	CLEVELAND	1:00
Sept. 22	at Atlanta	8:30	Nov. 24	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Sept. 29	TAMPA BAY	4:05	Dec. 1	BALTIMORE	1:00
Oct. 6	at Indianapolis	1:00	Dec. 8	at Carolina	1:00
Oct. 13	PITTSBURGH	1:00	Dec. 15	JACKSONVILLE	1:00
Oct. 20	Open date		Dec. 22	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Oct. 27	TENNESSEE	1:00	Dec. 29	at Buffalo	1:00
Nov. 3	at Houston	1:00	Strength of schedule: 29th		

Free agent Gus Frerotte was brought in to push Jon Kitna, whose 22 interceptions and six lost fumbles contributed heavily to the team's NFL-low 226 points in 2001. Kitna must shoulder the blame for making too many poor decisions. At the same time, he was driven to the brink by inconsistent receivers.

Coach Dick LeBeau is counting on continuity and a late-season offensive surge to carry over to 2002. His goal is to make the playoffs.

"I'm a guy whose glass is always half full," LeBeau says. "I think my odds (of returning in 2003) depend on how successful we are, and we're going to be successful. I'm going to focus that way. Winning ... that is the best job security I know in the league."

COACHING Strategies—LeBeau is from the old school. He realizes that teams win by running the ball and playing physical defense. He's also smart enough to realize that an offense can't achieve success without balance. So he hired offensive coordinator Bob Bratkowski in 2001 to jump-start a passing game that complements a strong ground attack led by Dillon.



Dillon's bruising, punishing running style draws comparisons to Hall of Fame legend Jim Brown.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Because of multiple formations and changing personnel groups, the quarterback and receivers spent most of last season struggling to get on the same page, but now Bratkowski is confident the offense will improve. Kitna knows the tendencies of his receivers now, and they know when and where to expect the ball from Kitna. And Frerotte is rapidly learning the offense.

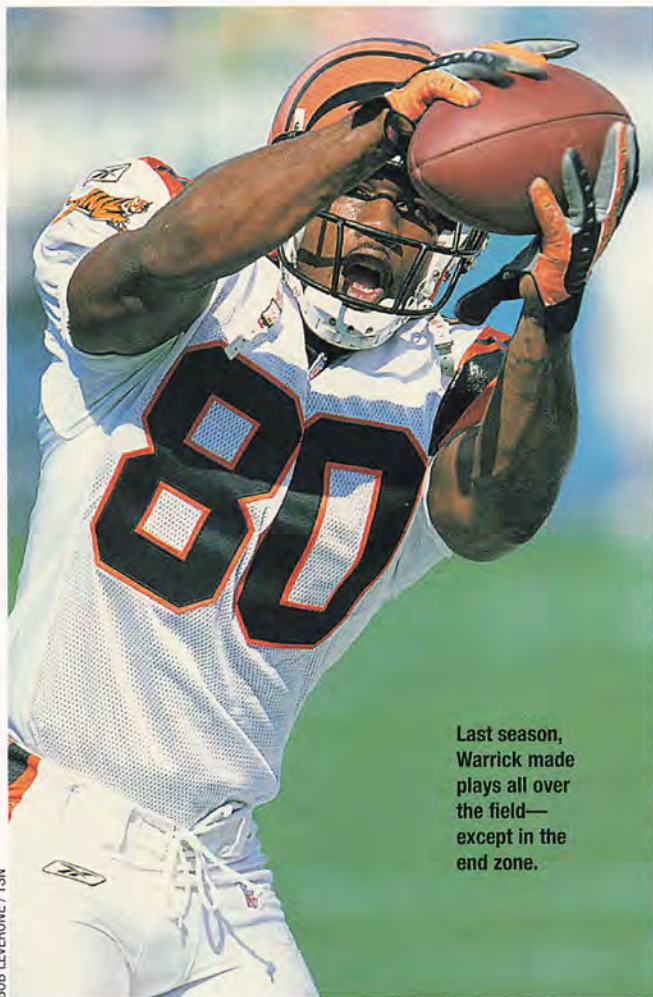
The idea is to establish the run, then take to the air and exploit one-on-one matchups when eight defenders crowd the line of scrimmage in an attempt to stop Dillon.

Defensive coordinator Mark Duffner's favorite word is "attack." He has an aggressive front seven—led by ends Justin Smith

and Reinard Wilson and linebackers Takeo Spikes and Brian Simmons—that wants to break its team-record sack total of 48 set last season. Duffner also wants more than 13 interceptions.

With the tackles getting penetration, the ends crashing down on the quarterback, and the linebackers blitzing, there should be more opportunities for interceptions from an improved secondary.

Style—A players' coach all the way, LeBeau has impersonated Elvis and dressed in a Superman costume to loosen up his team. But beneath that cool, slow-walking, slow-talking exterior beats the heart of a cut-



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Last season, Warrick made plays all over the field—except in the end zone.

throat competitor.

Because of his no-nonsense approach, LeBeau is able to communicate with players of all ages. Instead of getting in a player's face and chewing him out, he simply drapes an arm around a shoulder and speaks kindly. LeBeau sees himself as a teacher who is extremely patient and understanding. That's why his players love and respect him, believe in him and play hard for him.

While Bratkowski exhibits that same, low-

key, laid-back approach, Duffner is much more high-strung and emotional. The intensity level heightens when Duffner enters a room or steps on the field. He's an aggressive, go-getter who's not afraid to raise the roof with his high-pitched voice.

The common thread among the trio is a burning desire and sense of urgency to get the franchise on the winning track. They continue to exude confidence and accentuate the positive. Their reasoning: How can the players expect to be champions if the coaches don't believe it? **GRADE: C**

OFFENSE

Quarterbacks—

Kitna always has been more awkward than elegant. He is a gritty, gutty competitor, but his production needs to improve for the

team to reach the playoffs. There's no way the team can afford an ugly 12-touchdown, 22-interception repeat.

Enter Frerotte. The free agent from Denver, brought in on a one-year deal, shows no ill effects from offseason surgery in which a tendon from his left wrist was inserted in his right throwing shoulder to repair a third-degree separation.

Frerotte lacks speed and struggles to make plays on the move, but he's an excellent

thinker on the field with an ability to make fast, correct decisions. And his arm strength is superb.

Kitna has the early edge because of his year of experience in Bratkowski's system. He closed the season with the most passing yards (751) in back-to-back games in club history—411 in a 26-23 victory over Pittsburgh and 340 in a 23-21 win at Tennessee. Those performances whet the club's appetite for more. The Bengals hope those are signs of things to come, a jumping-off point for the offense to build on in '02.

The Bengals need Frerotte because former first-round pick Akili Smith is rehabilitating from a torn left hamstring. LeBeau also promises to give Scott Covington a longer look.

"I hate to be simplistic, but it is this simple," LeBeau says. "I'm looking for the quarterback that moves our football team and puts points on the board. We don't care who that is. The final line is productivity."

GRADE: D

Running backs—Dillon, who made his third straight Pro Bowl last season and became the sixth player in NFL history to rush for 1,000 yards in each of his first five seasons, firmly is established as one of the elite tailbacks in the NFL. He is at the peak of his career, so the position is in good hands.

He doesn't run with finesse. He attacks the line of scrimmage with a bruising, punishing style that draws comparisons to Hall of Fame legend Jim Brown. Dillon has improved his speed—a 96-yard run last year at Detroit, the longest play from scrimmage in team history, proved that—along with his blocking ability and pass-receiving skills. He is well-rounded now. The complete package, he practically can carry a team.

It's also comforting to have excellent depth with Brandon Bennett, Rudi Johnson and Curtis Keaton kicking, fighting, scratching and clawing for playing time behind Dillon. Bennett is the most complete backup, but Keaton is the fastest and Johnson has good balance and power.

Fullback is shaping up to be a competitive situation between Lorenzo Neal and Nick Williams. Neal is the incumbent, but Williams—fully recovered from a torn left knee ligament in 2001—wants the job back. The winner of that competition must be a triple threat. He needs to serve as lead blocker for Dillon, catch the ball out of the backfield and carry the ball with authority.

GRADE: A

Receivers—A year ago, the receiving corps was fast enough and talented enough to make an impact, but it was too young, immature and selfish, bogging down a mistake-prone offense by misreading coverages and making improper route adjustments.

Now, the wide receivers are older, wiser, more focused, disciplined and determined. There's blazing speed on the outside with

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-10	Levi Jones	OT	Arizona State	An aggressive run blocker and athletic pass protector.
2-41	Lamont Thompson	DB	Washington State	A ballhawk with good range and speed; will start right away.
3-67	Matt Schobel	TE	TCU	Has a knack for finding holes and gaining yards after the catch.
4-109	Travis Dorsch	P/K	Purdue	Has a strong leg, but Bengals crave his consistency and accuracy.
6-181	Marquand Manuel	DB	Florida	Hard hitter expected to contribute on special teams immediately.
7-219	Joey Evans	DE	North Carolina	A hard worker with good strength; will add depth on line.

Previous five first rounds

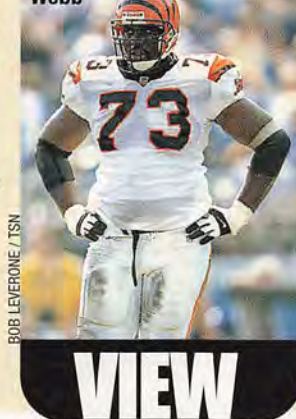
Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-14	Reinard Wilson	DE	Florida State	Backup with Bengals
'98-13	Takeo Spikes	LB	Auburn	Starter with Bengals
'98-17	Brian Simmons	LB	North Carolina	Starter with Bengals
'99-3	Akili Smith	QB	Oregon	Backup with Bengals
'00-4	Peter Warrick	WR	Florida State	Starter with Bengals
'01-4	Justin Smith	DE	Missouri	Starter with Bengals

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

They kind of got razed for drafting **Levi Jones** No. 1, but when you look at it, it was a pretty good pick. Their team is based around **Corey Dillon**, and they've got to be able to run the ball to be successful. **Richmond Webb** and **John Jackson** are basically close to being over the hill, and they need a young tackle desperately. Jones is a pretty aggressive run blocker and a real smart guy, so he may be able to step in and play early. ... When Dillon is healthy, he's as good a running back as there is. He's got the speed to break off some long touch-down runs and also the power to ram it inside between the tackles. He's dangerous on screen passes. ... They just don't have any bulk in the middle of their defensive line. The Ravens lost

OUTSIDE

Webb



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

VIEW

THE BENGALS

theirs, but the Bengals never really had any. **Tony Williams** is a small nose guard and I would consider **Oliver Gibson** a little bit undersized. There was talk that they were going to draft a big defensive end in the first round, but they didn't. ... At wide receiver, **Chad Johnson** showed flashes last year before he broke his collarbone. He's got dangerous speed. **Peter Warrick** is very hard to defend on third down out of the slot. **Darnay Scott** is a good, deep threat on the outside even though he's going into his eighth season. ... They'll have a pretty good pass rush with their linebackers. **Takeo Spikes** is a stud, a really good player. **Brian Simmons** is kind of a chase-and-cleanup guy. They finally got some production last year out of **Reinard Wilson**.

Darnay Scott and Chad Johnson. There's a brilliant slot receiver in Peter Warrick, who makes plays all over the field, and blossoming young stars in Danny Farmer, T.J. Houshmandzadeh and Ron Dugans. With that kind of depth and versatility, wide receiver is shaping up to be the most competitive position on the team.

Injuries decimated the tight end position last year. Tony McGee suffered torn knee cartilage, ended the season on injured reserve and was released. Sean Brewer was sidelined the entire season because of a severe groin injury. And Marco Battaglia was released following an appendectomy.

Now the job belongs to third-round pick Matt Schobel. He's a big, rugged, athletic

receiver with tremendous hands who only needs to improve his blocking to become a complete player. He'll help in the red zone, where the team scored only 19 touchdowns on 46 trips (41.3 percent) inside the opponents' 20-yard line. He's the kind of quality tight end that's been missing from the pass-catching arsenal. **GRADE: B-**

Line—Considering the ages of left tackles Richmond Webb (35) and John Jackson (37), this team had to get younger. So the Bengals grabbed Jones with their first-round pick (10th overall). This should help at a critical position.

Jones is strong at the point of attack and skilled at sealing off the end, making him a much better run blocker than Webb. Jones is just what Dillon needs.

As soon as Jones refines his pass-blocking technique and gets in sync with center Rich Braham, guards Matt O'Dwyer and Mike Goff, and road-grading right tackle Willie Anderson, he will be the starter ahead of Webb. It won't take long.

The backups—center Brock Gutierrez, guard Scott Rehberg and tackle Jamain Stephens—all are capable of starting. Victor Leyva, versatile enough to play guard and center, also will be in the mix. Their experience serves as quality insurance in case of injuries.

GRADE: B+

DEFENSE Line—

Resigning Wilson, the team's sack leader with nine, keeps the line intact and sends a message that 2002 won't be about rebuilding, but improving a quality defense and making it into something special. Wilson will rotate with Justin Smith at right end in the base defense, then will replace either Vaughn Booker or Eric Ogbogu at left end in pass-rushing situations.

Booker, Oliver Gibson, Tony Williams and Smith don't comprise the league's biggest front four. But it is a quick unit that causes havoc up front.

Gibson and Williams, the tackles, have a knack for getting penetration. That forces the quarterback to move and lose his relationship with his blockers. It also allows Wilson and Smith to do what they do best: sprint off the edge and close quickly on the quarterback.

Smith is a big-time pass rusher. He has strong hands, generates terrific speed with his leg drive and gives relentless effort.

The Bengals don't have the luxury of a full-time left end.

Booker and Ogbogu, formerly with the Jets, are run stoppers who will rotate in the base defense.

If changes are made, the 34-year-old Booker could be the odd man out. He battled through several minor injuries that cost him practice time, but he performed well in games. He still is

effective against the run, but his durability will be a factor in shaping the final roster.

Bernard Whittington is a versatile, reliable end and tackle. He will rotate inside with backup Glen Steele to push the pile and keep Gibson and Williams fresh. **GRADE: B**

Linebackers—This is the strength of the defense.

Spikes, Simmons and Steve Foley enter their fifth season together, and they are a tightly-knit group. All three are fast, physical linebackers who stay in their lanes, fill gaps, get off blocks and chase down plays from the backside. They have become more efficient in pass coverage, making them solid, all-around players.

Because he plays on the strong side, Foley isn't as high profile as Spikes or Simmons.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. **Chad Johnson** will become the team's top deep threat and emerge as a big-play receiver. He has a quick release, excellent speed and good hands and is fearless in traffic.
2. **Corey Dillon**, who is 239 yards away from James Brooks' club career rushing record of 6,447, will top it in Week 2 at Cleveland.
3. **Justin Smith** and **Reinard Wilson** each will generate double-digit totals for sacks as the defense breaks the club record of 48 set in 2001. Smith will earn a spot in the Pro Bowl.
4. A pair of newcomers—veteran CB Jeff Burris and rookie S Lamont Thompson—will make enough interceptions to inject life in the secondary.
5. After scoring an NFL-low 226 points in 2001, the Bengals will produce more than 300 points and make a run at a .500 record. Cincinnati has been below .500 each year since 1997.



Burris

2001 results

Sept. 9	NEW ENGLAND	W	23-17
Sept. 23	BALTIMORE	W	21-10
Sept. 30	at San Diego	L	14-28
Oct. 7	at Pittsburgh	L	7-16
Oct. 14	CLEVELAND	W	24-14
Oct. 21	CHICAGO	L	0-24
Oct. 28	at Detroit	W	31-27
Nov. 4	Open date		
Nov. 11	at Jacksonville	L	13-30
Nov. 18	TENNESSEE	L	7-20
Nov. 25	at Cleveland	L	0-18
Dec. 2	TAMPA BAY (OT)	L	13-16
Dec. 9	JACKSONVILLE	L	10-14
Dec. 16	at N.Y. Jets	L	14-15
Dec. 23	at Baltimore	L	0-16
Dec. 30	PITTSBURGH (OT)	W	26-23
Jan. 6	at Tennessee	W	23-21

Moves

Key additions

CB Jeff Burris	Free agent/Colts
QB Gus Frerotte	Free agent/Broncos
DE Eric Ogbogu	Free agent/Jets

Key losses

TE Marco Battaglia	Free agent/Buccaneers
SS Chris Carter	Free agent/Texans
TE Tony McGee	Free agent/Cowboys
QB Scott Mitchell	Free agent
S Darryl Williams	Free agent

Stadium/Media

Paul Brown Stadium (65,393, grass).

Ticket information: 513-621-TDTD (8383).

Training site: Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky.; 502-863-7088.

Radio: WCKY-AM (1360); WOFX-FM (92.5); WLW-AM (700).

Website: www.bengals.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 6-10 (6th in AFC Central); 4-6 in division; 5-8 in conference; 1-2 vs. NFC; 4-4 at home; 2-6 on road; 1-0 on artificial turf; 5-10 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Dick LeBeau's regular-season record: 10-19 in two seasons with Bengals.

LeBeau's postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 24-56 (.300, ranks 29th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1990.

Rankings

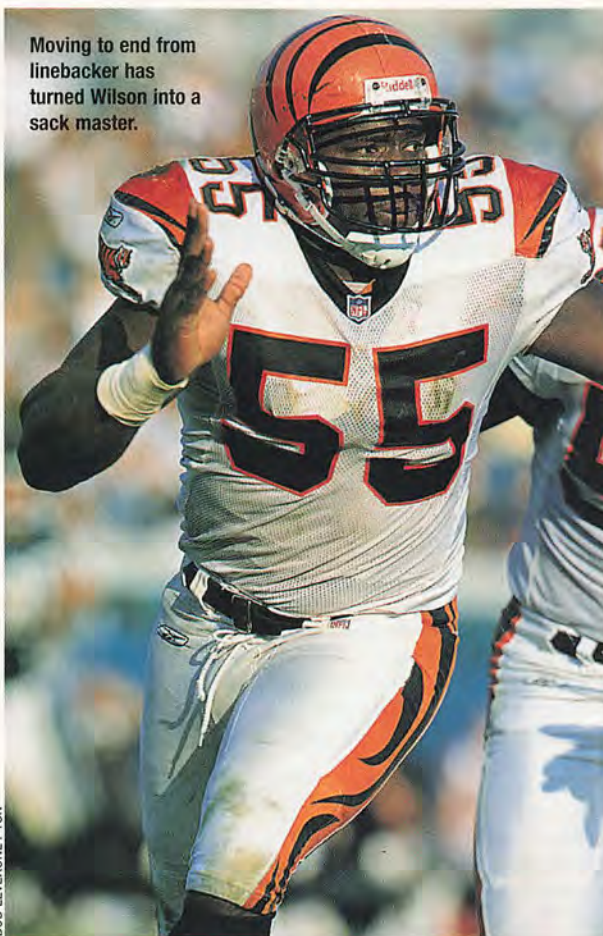
	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*300.0	13	23
Rushing offense	*107.0	10	T18
Passing offense	*193.0	12	23
Scoring offense	226	16	31
Total defense	*302.0	5	9
Rushing defense	*104.7	7	11
Passing defense	*197.3	7	12
Scoring defense	309	7	14
Takeaways	28	T6	T16
Giveaways	37	14	26
Turnover differential	-9	13	T24
Sacks	48	2	T4
Sacks allowed	28	5	8

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coch	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dick LeBeau	Head coach	30	6
Bob Bratkowski	Offensive coordinator	11	2
Mark Duffner	Def. coord./linebackers	6	6
Paul Alexander	Offensive line	11	9
Jim Anderson	Running backs	19	19
Ken Anderson	Quarterbacks	10	10
Louie Cloffi	Defensive assistant	6	6
Kevin Coyle	Cornerbacks	2	2
John Garrett	Tight ends	11	2
Rodney Holman	Asst. strength & cond.	4	2
Tim Krumrie	Defensive line	8	8
Steve Mooshagian	Wide receivers	4	4
Darren Perry	Safeties	1	1
Al Roberts	Special teams	16	6
Bob Surace	Offensive assistant	1	1
Kim Wood	Strength & conditioning	28	28

Moving to end from
linebacker has
turned Wilson into a
sack master.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

He usually is matched up with the tight end and is stuck turning running plays inside while keeping containment. Simmons roams tackle to tackle as the middle linebacker. Spikes, the weakside linebacker, is free to spend more time heading upfield in a play-maker role.

It's a big plus having backups the caliber of Armegis Spearman and Adrian Ross. Spearman has good lateral quickness and speed, plus the innate ability to find the ball quickly. Ross' strength is his versatility to play inside and outside.

Spikes and Simmons are heading into contract years and the Bengals want to keep both. It will cost the team a bundle, but they are worth every penny. **GRADE: A**

Secondary—Adding free-agent cornerback Jeff Burris convinced the Bengals to pass on Phillip Buchanon and select Jones in the draft. So, the pressure's on Burris to prove management didn't make a mistake.

The team still lacks a shutdown corner, but Burris and Artrell Hawkins have enough speed, savvy and coverage skills to hold their own on the outside. Hawkins nearly bolted via free agency, but the Bengals brought him back because they believe he's ready to blossom. A second-round pick in 1998, Hawkins is fast and tough, and better at playing the ball in the air. Now he just needs to get more deflections and interceptions. If he

doesn't, a host of backups, including nickel back Kevin Kaesviharn, Rodney Heath and Robert Bean, will get their chance.

Safety was a problem area going into the draft. Second-round pick Lamont Thompson should beat out Mark Roman for the starting job at free safety. This will allow Cory Hall to move back to his natural strong safety spot in place of JoJuan Armour.

Armour is a solid backup and terrific special teams player. He is excellent in run support, but he hasn't developed the ball skills necessary to survive in pass coverage. Hall is no sure thing, either. He will get pushed hard by sixth-round pick Marquand Manuel.

Manuel's hustle and playmaking abilities are welcome, but the player the team is counting on for interceptions is Thompson. He's a ball-hawk with excellent range and closing speed.

The secondary's goal is to become a big-play unit that generates more interceptions and gives the offense better field position. **GRADE: D**

SPECIAL TEAMS The best quality a kicker can have is exactly what was missing from Neil Rackers' repertoire—consistency. That's why the Bengals selected punter/kicker Travis Dorsch in the fourth round.

Over the last two years, Rackers made only 29 of 49 field-goal attempts. Now, Dorsch is expected to take the job from Rackers. Dorsch's high, arcing kickoffs to the goal line are a sight to behold. The 6-6 Dorsch will be used almost exclusively as a kicker, although the door is open for him to punt when the team is backed up near its goal line.

Nick Harris is an improving directional punter who shows good leg strength and hang time, causing plenty of fair catches. But he needs to improve the quickness of his release.

Now the team must find a dependable kickoff returner to turn around the weakest unit on the squad. Look for Houshmandzadeh to become more of a kick-return force because he's fast, fearless and decisive. For those reasons, he could unseat Keaton on kickoff returns and Warrick as the punt returner.

REALIGNMENT reality

The Bengals have only two things to say to the former AFC Central: Goodbye and good riddance. This team never was happy stuck in a six-team division loaded with so many good teams. No longer burdened by having to face Jacksonville and Tennessee twice each season, the new AFC North—with Baltimore, Cleveland and Pittsburgh—is a little easier to manage if only because there are fewer teams to climb over. The last few years, the Bengals played only six games outside of their division. Many teams have only heard about the power running of Corey Dillon, who has put up more than 1,100 rushing yards in five consecutive seasons. Now, a greater variety of opponents actually can see and feel his power. There is a game at expansion Houston and a late December trip to Buffalo, but the rest of the road games are short hops by air. No long charter flights for the team this year.



Spikes may be the best linebacker in Bengals history—and he'll soon want to be paid like it.

Keaton was tentative on kickoffs. Warrick tries too hard to make big plays and uses too much wasted motion in the form of fakes and jukes. He needs to catch the ball and go.

Brad St. Louis and Randy Chevrier are the candidates for long-snapper duties. The job will go to the more versatile player. St. Louis, who is also a tight end, is the better pure snapper. Chevrier has improved the quickness of his release and has a chance to contribute as a defensive tackle. **GRADE: C-**

BOTTOM LINE The Bengals learned from their mistakes last season. They should be tougher, smarter and more disciplined on offense. If they pull together and get solid quarterback play, there's enough talent here to earn a playoff berth for the first time in what seems like forever. But a more realistic goal is a .500 season. **TSN**

Chick Ludwig covers the Bengals for the Dayton Daily News.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ Darnay Scott
■ Chad Johnson

LT ■ Levi Jones
■ Richmond Webb

LG ■ Matt O'Dwyer
□ Scott Rehberg

C ■ Rich Braham
□ Brock Gutierrez

RG ■ Mike Goff
□ Victor Leyva

RT ● Willie Anderson
□ Jamain Stephens

TE ■ Matt Schobel
□ Sean Brewer

WR ■ Peter Warrick
■ Danny Farmer

QB □ Jon Kitna
□ Gus Frerotte

RB ● Corey Dillon
■ Brandon Bennett

FB ■ Lorenzo Neal
□ Nick Williams

Defense

LE ■ Vaughn Booker
■ Eric Ogbogu

LT ■ Oliver Gibson
□ Glen Steele

RT ■ Tony Williams
■ Bernard Whittington

RE ● Justin Smith
■ Reinard Wilson

LLB ■ Steve Foley
□ Canute Curtis

MLB ● Brian Simmons
■ Adrian Ross

OLB ● Takeo Spikes
■ Armegis Spearman

LCB ■ Jeff Burris
■ Kevin Kaesviharn

RCB ■ Artrell Hawkins
□ Rodney Heath

SS ■ Cory Hall
□ JoJuan Armour

FS ■ Lamont Thompson
■ Mark Roman

Specialists

K ■ Travis Dorsch

P ■ Nick Harris

KR ■ TJ Houshmandzadeh

PR ● Peter Warrick

LS ■ Brad St. Louis

● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

BENGALS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
4	Covington, Scott	6-2/217	1-17-76	3	Miami (Fla.)	D7b/99	0/0
12	Frerotte, Gus	6-3/225	7-31-71	9	Tulsa	UFA/02	4/1
3	Kitna, Jon	6-2/217	9-21-72	6	Central Washington	UFA/01	16/15
11	Smith, Akili	6-3/220	8-21-75	4	Oregon	D1/99	2/1
Running backs							
36	Bennett, Brandon	5-11/220	2-3-73	4	South Carolina	FA/98	16/1
28	Dillon, Corey	6-1/225	10-24-74	6	Washington	D2/97	16/16
32	Johnson, Rudi	5-10/233	10-1-79	2	Auburn	D4/01	2/0
29	Keaton, Curtis	5-10/219	10-18-76	3	James Madison	D4/00	13/0
41	Neal, Lorenzo (FB)	5-11/240	12-27-70	10	Fresno State	FA/01	16/10
30	Williams, Nick (FB)	6-2/267	3-30-77	4	Miami (Fla.)	D5/99	4/2
Receivers							
88	Brewer, Sean (TE)	6-4/255	10-5-77	2	San Jose State	D3/01	—
81	Dugans, Ron	6-2/205	4-27-77	3	Florida State	D3/00	16/3
83	Farmer, Danny	6-3/215	5-21-77	3	UCLA	W-Pitt/00	12/1
84	Houshmandzadeh, T.J.	6-1/197	9-26-77	2	Oregon State	D7/01	12/1
85	Johnson, Chad	6-2/192	1-9-78	2	Oregon State	D2/01	12/3
43	McMullen, Kirk (TE)	6-4/255	7-19-77	2	Pittsburgh	FA/01	7/2
89	Schobel, Matt (TE)	6-5/263	11-4-78	R	Texas Christian	D3/02	—
86	Scott, Darnay	6-1/204	7-7-72	9	San Diego State	D2/94	16/15
48	St. Louis, Brad (TE)	6-3/247	8-19-76	3	SW Missouri State	D7/00	11/0
80	Warrick, Peter	5-11/195	6-19-77	3	Florida State	D1/00	16/14
Offensive linemen							
71	Anderson, Willie (T)	6-5/340	7-11-75	7	Auburn	D1/96	16/16
74	Braham, Rich (C)	6-4/309	11-6-70	9	West Virginia	UFA/00	16/16
63	Goff, Mike (G)	6-5/311	1-6-76	5	Iowa	D3b/98	16/16
62	Gutierrez, Brock (C)	6-3/304	9-25-73	6	Central Michigan	FA/98	14/0
65	Jackson, John (T)	6-6/300	1-4-65	15	Eastern Kentucky	FA/00	11/0
76	Jones, Levi (T)	6-5/304	8-24-79	R	Arizona State	D1/02	—
77	Leyva, Victor (G)	6-4/315	12-18-77	2	Arizona State	D5/01	0/0
72	O'Dwyer, Matt (G)	6-5/313	9-1-72	8	Northwestern	UFA/99	12/12
79	Rehberg, Scott (G)	6-8/315	11-17-73	6	Central Michigan	FA/00	15/4
75	Stephens, Jamain (T)	6-6/340	1-9-74	7	North Carolina A&T	W-Pitt/99	9/2
73	Webb, Richmond (T)	6-6/325	1-11-67	13	Texas A&M	UFA/01	16/16
Defensive linemen							
96	Booker, Vaughn (E)	6-5/300	2-24-68	9	Cincinnati	UFA/00	14/13
91	Chevrier, Randy (T)	6-2/291	6-6-76	2	McGill (Canada)	FA/01	13/0
52	Evans, Joey (E)	6-4/264	8-22-79	R	North Carolina	D7/02	—
99	Gibson, Oliver (T)	6-2/315	3-15-72	8	Notre Dame	UFA/99	16/16
58	Langford, Jevon (E)	6-3/270	2-16-74	7	Oklahoma State	D4/96	3/0
93	Monds, Mario (T)	6-3/325	11-10-76	2	Cincinnati	W-Was/01	2/0
92	Ogbogu, Eric (E)	6-4/280	7-18-75	5	Maryland	UFA/02	15/0
90	Smith, Justin (E)	6-4/270	9-30-79	2	Missouri	D1/01	15/11
70	Steele, Glen (E)	6-4/300	10-4-74	5	Michigan	D4/98	16/1
97	Whittington, Bernard (T)	6-5/280	8-20-71	9	Indiana	UFA/01	16/5
94	Williams, Tony (T)	6-1/292	7-9-75	6	Memphis	UFA/01	13/13
55	Wilson, Reinard (E)	6-2/272	12-17-73	6	Florida State	D1/97	16/5
Linebackers							
98	Curtis, Canute	6-2/257	8-4-74	6	West Virginia	FA/97	16/4
95	Foley, Steve	6-3/260	9-9-75	5	Northeast Louisiana	D3a/98	12/12
50	Johnson, Riall	6-3/243	4-20-78	2	Stanford	D6/01	7/0
57	Ross, Adrian	6-2/256	2-19-75	5	Colorado State	FA/98	16/1
56	Simmons, Brian	6-3/248	6-21-75	5	North Carolina	D1b/98	16/16
59	Spearman, Armegis	6-1/258	4-5-78	3	Mississippi	FA/00	—
51	Spikes, Takeo	6-2/245	12-17-76	5	Auburn	D1a/98	15/15
Defensive backs							
33	Armour, JoJuan (S)	5-11/220	7-10-76	4	Miami of Ohio	W-Jax/99	16/11
23	Bean, Robert (CB)	5-11/178	1-6-78	3	Mississippi State	D5/00	15/4
21	Burris, Jeff (CB)	6-0/190	6-7-72	9	Notre Dame	FA/02	15/15
26	Hall, Cory (S)	6-0/213	12-5-76	4	Fresno State	D3/99	16/15
27	Hawkins, Artrell (CB)	5-10/190	11-24-75	5	Cincinnati	D2/98	14/13
22	Heath, Rodney (CB)	5-10/177	10-29-74	4	Minnesota	FA/99	5/5
25	Jennings, Ligarious (CB)	5-8/202	11-3-77	2	Tennessee State	FA/01	9/0
34	Kaesviharn, Kevin (CB)	6-1/190	8-29-76	2	Augustana (S.D.)	FA/01	10/3
44	Manuel, Marquand (S)	6-0/209	7-11-79	R	Florida	D6/02	—
20	Roman, Mark (S)	5-11/184	3-26-77	3	Louisiana State	D2/00	13/8
24	Thompson, Lamont (S)	6-1/220	7-30-78	R	Washington State	D2/02	—
Specialists							
2	Dorsch, Travis (P)	6-6/221	9-4-79	R	Purdue	D4/02	—
8	Harris, Nick (P)	6-2/220	7-23-78	2	California	W-Den/01	16/0
5	Rackers, Neil (K)	6-0/205	8-16-76	3	Illinois	D6/00	16/0

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Browns

Brown is looking to rebound after a 2001 season marred by an assortment of injuries.

Davis believes it, too, but he knows it won't be easy. "Now comes the hard part: going from 7-9—from the middle of the pack where a lot of teams are—to the playoffs," Davis says. "It's a difficult step."

And one the Browns never could have conceived taking before Davis arrived.

COACHING Strategies—Davis is an aggressive, no-nonsense guy who wants his players react to what he does instead of him reacting to what they do. On the field, he wants his team to attack—and keep attacking—on both sides of the ball. He wants to force the action and keep the game at a fast pace.

That was evident last season—especially on defense, where the Browns went after the quarterback, playing the run on the way. Even when they didn't get a sack, they wanted to put pressure on the quarterback and force him into the mistakes. It worked—the

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	KANSAS CITY	1:00	Nov. 10	Open date	
Sept. 15	CINCINNATI	1:00	Nov. 17	at Cincinnati	1:00
Sept. 22	at Tennessee	1:00	Nov. 24	at New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 29	at Pittsburgh	1:00	Dec. 1	CAROLINA	1:00
Oct. 6	BALTIMORE	8:30	Dec. 8	at Jacksonville	1:00
Oct. 13	at Tampa Bay	4:15	Dec. 15	INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
Oct. 20	HOUSTON	4:05	Dec. 22	at Baltimore	4:15
Oct. 27	at N.Y. Jets	1:00	Dec. 29	ATLANTA	1:00
Nov. 3	PITTSBURGH	1:00	Strength of schedule: T 19th		

Browns led the league with 33 interceptions, and the defense set up many short fields for the young, struggling offense. An influx of better, more athletic players can only make this defense better this season.

On offense, Davis wants a solid, smash-mouth running game, which the team has lacked. But with first-round draft pick William Green running behind an improved line, that should change. The ground game will set up play-action passes on which receivers can turn short throws into big gains.

The Browns are expected to use a two-tight end, one-back set. They wanted to scrap the H-back scheme they used last year and replace it with a more conventional look involving a fullback, but they don't have a capable player at the position.

Style—Davis is a high-strung, high-energy guy who wants to get things accomplished ASAP. That helps provide continuous, positive motivation for his players.

That's especially important when considering what some of the Browns experienced in the seasons before Davis' arrival. They didn't need to hear that they had been horrible in 1999 and 2000—they already knew that. What they needed was positive reinforcement, and that's exactly what Davis gave them.

Davis is on a fast track to improve, but he and his assistants are excellent teachers; as such, they have shown great patience with the players.

BY STEVE KING

Butch Davis is at it again, and the people of Cleveland could not be happier.

Davis, who rebuilt a college program at Miami (Fla.), gave strong evidence in the 2001 season that he will do the same with the Browns.

A downtrodden team that had posted an abysmal 5-27 mark in the two years following its return to the league began an about-face in Davis' first year as coach. The Browns were one of the biggest surprises in the league last season, their 7-9 finish more than doubling their 2000 victory total of three. In

fact, after 10 games the 6-4 Browns were in position for the final AFC wild-card berth. Then injuries caused them to fade down the stretch. But that sluggish finish didn't cloud the big picture of what had happened: Football in Cleveland had become fun again.

Entering the 2002 season, the Browns have cast away their old "p" word—pathetic—and traded it for a new one—postseason. And they're not kidding.

"Based on what we've done in the offseason, the playoffs are a realistic goal and expectation for this team," Browns president Carmen Policy says.

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

Barring injury, this is a playoff-caliber defense. Both **Robert Griffith** and **Earl Holmes** will bring toughness and playmaking ability to a defense that showed it could hold its own against their division rivals. Those moves, coupled with second-year standout **Gerard Warren** and Pro Bowl linebacker **Jamir Miller**, put the Browns in position to take the next step into the playoffs. The unknown factor is **Courtney Brown**. People are still waiting for him to play his way out of the "potential" category and into the superstar category. ... Starting corners **Daylon McCutcheon** and **Corey Fuller** are hanging on to their jobs by the skin of their teeth. **Anthony Henry**, last year's rookie sensation, is waiting in the wings and can beat out either starter. ... **Tim Couch** is on

OUTSIDE



ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

VIEW

THE BROWNS

track to have a breakout season, showing more maturity and better decision-making ability. He is a tough, deceptive athlete, and he is accurate when given time. ... **Kevin Johnson**, Couch's No. 1 target, probably has as good a pair of hands as any receiver in the league. **Quincy Morgan** has talent, but he has that inconsistent label. **JaJuan Dawson**, **Dennis Northcutt** and newly added **Chris Sanders** all provide depth, and second-round pick **Andre Davis** adds the much-needed speed threat to their arsenal. ... With No. 1 pick **William Green**, the Browns can finally compete with the rest of the division's running back horses—**Jerome Bettis**, **Corey Dillon** and **Jamal Lewis**. Even if the Browns don't have a legitimate fullback, this kid can provide his own path with his size and strength.

When Davis was putting together his staff last year and tweaking it this offseason, he leaned heavily toward coaches with strong college backgrounds. He believes college coaches are excellent teachers and thought the college approach would be successful in directing a roster stocked with young players.

That approach should, and no doubt will, continue, because in many ways this team is younger than it was a year ago.

What will help the process along is that after the team's remarkable progress last year, Davis now has all the players' attention. They know the success he had before coming to Cleveland happened for a good reason. The guy is good at what he does, and he

surrounds himself with quality assistants. **GRADE: A**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Even before Tim Couch became the first draft pick of the "new" Browns, the debate in Cleveland raged over his ability to lead this team. The debate only has heated up since, but this could be the year many of the questions about Couch finally will be answered.

In 2001, the first season in which Couch played all 16 games, he put up decent numbers—3,040 yards, 17 touchdowns, 59.9 percent passing—though he also threw 21 interceptions. He has a good arm, sees the field well and has proven toughness. But now that his surrounding cast has been improved, Couch must be better, especially in terms of consistency.

The team will succeed or fail depending in large part on Couch's play. Among the backups, neither Kelly Holcomb, who has started only one game in five seasons, nor Josh Booty, who has yet to attempt a pass in the pros, could man the position capably for an extended stretch.

Davis has bent over backward to publicly support Couch. At the same time, Davis was methodically smashing to bits much of the shaky foundation that was constructed in the years before he came to Cleveland. Because of the Browns' huge financial commitment to Couch and the position he plays, Couch will be the last block to fall, but fall he eventually will if he

doesn't get the job done. And keep in mind: Ken Dorsey, who quarterbacked some of Davis' best teams at Miami, will be available in next year's draft. **GRADE: B**

Running backs—At long last, the Browns have an every-down runner in Green, their first-round pick out of Boston College.

In Green and James Jackson, both legitimate starting backs, Davis always will have a fresh, quality back in the game—one who can run all the plays in the playbook effectively.

When Jackson went down with a bum ankle and smallish scatback Jamel White was pressed into duty last season, the Browns were forced to cut their playbook in half because there were a lot of plays White was not physically capable of running.

Davis believes Green can do for the Browns what Edgerrin James did for the Hurricanes and Emmitt Smith did for the Cowboys when Davis was Dallas' offensive coordinator—that is, be an effective runner who can go the distance and score at any time.

White still will be in the plans, but he will be a third-down back.

GRADE: C+

Receivers—

What would the offense have done without Kevin Johnson last year? Not much, if anything.

After being dangled as trade bait last preseason, Johnson pro-

duced a regular season of 1,097 yards on 84 catches and nine touchdowns, which placed him among the best young wideouts in the league. He enters this season as the clear go-to guy, but he also has some help, which should make him even more effective.

Coming out of college in 2001, Quincy Morgan had the reputation of dropping too many passes. He lived up to that reputation in his rookie season. But he also was known

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. The Browns will have their first winning record—and will contend for their first AFC playoff spot—since 1994.
2. QB Tim Couch will take advantage of a better line, more explosive weapons in the passing game and an improved running game to become the kind of player he was expected to be when taken with the No. 1 overall pick in the 1999 draft.
3. RB William Green, the team's top draft pick, won't have a run over 20 yards all year but will have at least three 100-yard games.
4. LB Jamir Miller won't have the season he had in 2001, but he will make the Pro Bowl for the second straight year and will play a key role in one of the league's top defenses.
5. CB Anthony Henry will fail to duplicate his league-leading 10 interceptions of 2001, but he will do a better, more consistent job in coverage.



Henry

2001 results

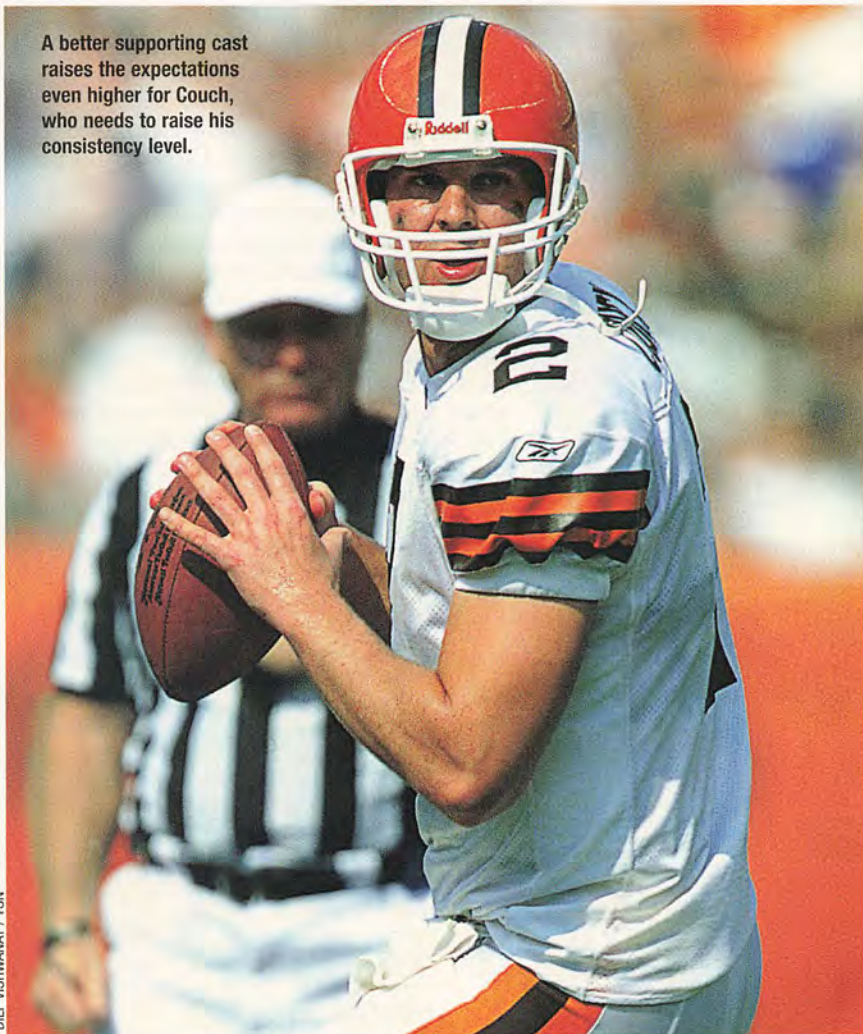
Sept. 9	SEATTLE	L	6-9
Sept. 23	DETROIT	W	24-14
Sept. 30	at Jacksonville	W	23-14
Oct. 7	SAN DIEGO	W	20-16
Oct. 14	at Cincinnati	L	14-24
Oct. 21	BALTIMORE	W	24-14
Oct. 28	Open date		
Nov. 4	at Chicago (OT)	L	21-27
Nov. 11	PITTSBURGH (OT)	L	12-15
Nov. 18	at Baltimore	W	27-17
Nov. 25	CINCINNATI	W	18-0
Dec. 2	TENNESSEE	L	15-31
Dec. 9	at New England	L	16-27
Dec. 16	JACKSONVILLE	L	10-15
Dec. 23	at Green Bay	L	7-30
Dec. 30	at Tennessee	W	41-38
Jan. 6	at Pittsburgh	L	7-28

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A better supporting cast raises the expectations even higher for Couch, who needs to raise his consistency level.

DILP VISHWANATH / TSN



in college for making big plays when he did catch the ball, and he proved that part true last season, too. With a year under his belt, he should be much more consistent.

Like Morgan, 2002 second-round draft pick Andre Davis is big and extremely fast—possibly the fastest player on the team—but he needs to work on his hands. Look for JaJuan Dawson, injured for much of the last two years, and Andre King to make contributions. Both catch the ball very well.

Former Titan Chris Sanders was brought in to provide much-needed veteran leadership on and off the field. Dennis Northcutt, a 2000 second-round bust, might be on his way out.

At tight end, the Browns may well need the personnel for a two-tight end set because they have not found a fullback. Look for Rickey Dudley, last year's starter until suffering a foot injury, and 2002 fourth-rounder Darnell Sanders, a big-time blocker who was underutilized at Ohio State, to get lots of playing time. **GRADE: C+**

Line—This group has been horrible the last three seasons, but like the Browns' playoff drought, the line's woes also may end this year.

Although there probably still is more work to do on the line than at any other area on the team, the Browns made some good offseason moves by signing right tackle Ryan Tucker and versatile Barry Stokes as free agents. They also re-signed Tre' Johnson and drafted Melvin Fowler in the third round.

None is an All-Pro—at least for now—but each will be better than anyone the

Browns have had. All are smash-mouth run blockers, the type of linemen Butch Davis wants for the power ground game he hopes to develop.

The best lineman is Ross Verba, a guard playing out of position at left tackle. Young Paul Zukauskas isn't ready to play the tackle spot. Fowler, who played center at Maryland, will be used at left guard ahead of Stokes. The center will be Dave Wohlabaugh, whose weight-room work has transformed him from a finesse to a power player.

Right guard Johnson, an excellent run blocker, is the key to the line. If he stays healthy, which in the past he has had problems doing, this line possibly could be better than projected. If he gets hurt, all bets are off.

The most interesting player of the bunch is Shaun O'Hara. The most versatile guy on the line, he's being groomed to succeed Wohlabaugh but also can play guard and long snap. He also is a favorite of Davis—one of the few players remaining from the Chris Palmer regime the coach really likes.

GRADE: C

DEFENSE Line—This has been, and continues to be, the strength of the team. The Browns have two of their foundation players here in right end Courtney Brown, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2000 draft, and tackle Gerard Warren, who was the No. 3 overall pick in 2001.

Brown missed most of last season with assorted injuries, but he's healthy again and looking to rebound. Because he did not play enough in 2001 to further his development, expect a slow start.

Warren was a so-so performer during the first half of last season, but an off-field incident in November involving a gun seemed to wake him up. He had a strong finish, and the Browns are expecting Warren, who has great strength and good speed for his size (6-4, 322) to pick up where he left off.

Kenard Lang will replace departed free agent Keith McKenzie at left end. Davis likes Lang because he is effective against the run.

The sticking point is at the tackle spot opposite Warren, where unheralded Mark Smith is the man. Smith has good hustle,

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-16	William Green	RB	Boston College	Can he save the running game? The Browns are counting on it.
2-47	Andre Davis	WR	Virginia Tech	Could be more valuable as a return man than a receiver this season.
3-76	Melvin Fowler	C	Maryland	College center is expected to open season as starting left guard.
4-101	Kevin Bentley	LB	Northwestern	Not expected to start but should provide reliable depth.
4-111	Ben Taylor	LB	Virginia Tech	Versatile enough to play inside or out but needs to add weight.
4-122	Darnell Sanders	TE	Ohio State	Good blocker whose receiving skills were underutilized at OSU.
5-141	Andre Davis	LB	Florida	Expected to back up Earl Holmes on the inside this year.
7-227	Joaquin Gonzalez	OT	Miami (Fla.)	Don't dismiss his chances; he has beaten the odds before.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'99-1	Tim Couch	QB	Kentucky	Starter with Browns
'00-1	Courtney Brown	DE	Penn State	Starter with Browns
'01-3	Gerard Warren	DT	Florida	Starter with Browns

but he greatly trails Warren, Brown and Lang in terms of talent. Orpheus Roye probably is more talented than Smith and will battle him for the job, but Davis is not fond of Roye.

The Browns will try to compensate for Smith's technical weaknesses by moving Lang inside on passing downs. That is made possible by their excellent depth at end, where the team has two young speed rushers in Tyrone Rogers, who came on last season, and Arnold Miller, who missed all of 2001 with injuries but is expected to shine in 2002. **GRADE: A-**

Linebackers—Jamir Miller has been a con-

starters without the defense collapsing. They also will contribute on special teams.

GRADE: A-

Secondary—The Browns have struggled mightily at safety, especially free safety, the last three years. The situation improved in 2001, when Earl Little manned strong safety and Devin Bush displaced the disappointing Percy Ellsworth at free safety. But the arrival of strong safety Griffith—in the team's most significant free-agent signing in recent seasons—raises the level of play even higher.

Griffith is a big, strong, tough, hard hitter who makes plays over the middle. His presence will be a deterrent for receivers and runners, and Bush and Little have been moved to free safety in his wake.

Little (6-0, 198) wore down late last year because he's not big enough to withstand a full season with all the hitting required at strong safety. But with Griffith on the field, he will be fresher and more effective. Keep an eye on backup Michael Jameson. He spent his entire rookie season on injured reserve with an ankle injury, but the Browns really like him. He and Bush will provide quality reserve play.

The team always has been better at cornerback than at safety. Daylon McCutcheon is the best cover man and the defense's most capable tackler. Corey Fuller may be slowing a bit, but he still brings physical toughness and attitude to the position.

Anthony Henry, a 2001 fourth-round pick who surprised everyone by tying for the league lead with 10 interceptions, will get more playing time behind Fuller. Lewis Sanders

has been plagued by injuries since his college days, but the Browns believe they've determined the cause—a condition that involves the build-up of calcium in the body—and he has been treated. Sanders is a solid cover man who, when healthy, always has been able to get his hands on the ball.

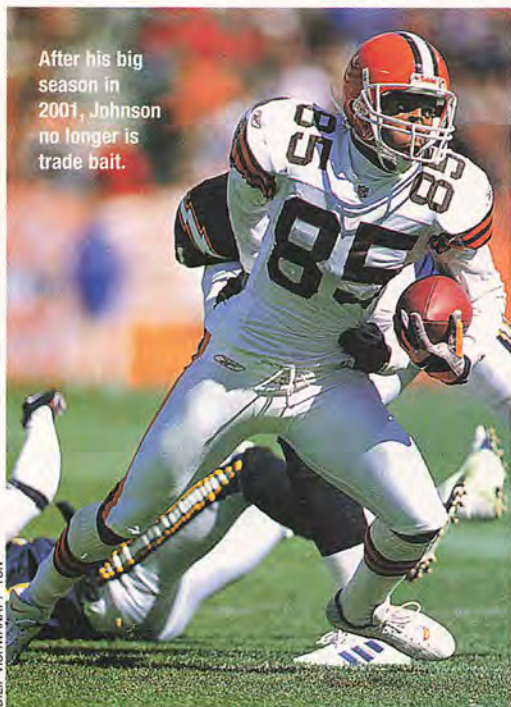
GRADE: B

SPECIAL TEAMS It's either feast or famine with the Browns' special teams. In kicker Phil Dawson, punter Chris Gardocki and long snapper Ryan Kuehl, they have three players who are at or near the top of the league at their position.

Gardocki arguably has been the MVP of the team the last three years. He's especially good in placing punts inside the 20. Dawson proved that he's one of the best young kickers in the league last season, connecting on 22 of 25 field-goal attempts.

But after them, the Browns undoubtedly are the worst team in the league at the other special teams positions.

These Browns never have returned a punt or kickoff for a touchdown in a regular-sea-



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

stant, pass-rushing presence at linebacker the past few seasons, but he was partnered with many nameless, faceless others.

Last year, he got some real help when free agent Dwayne Rudd was signed. This offseason, the team added free-agent middle man Earl Holmes, who led the Steelers in tackles the past three years. He replaces Wali Rainer, who had an all-star attitude and work ethic but was so slow and tentative that he made few impact plays.

Holmes is a tough, aggressive, strong tackler who will flatten ball carriers before they have a chance to get going. His presence will help mask Smith's deficiencies at tackle and, along with safety Robert Griffith, will strengthen the middle of the team's defense.

The Browns also are much deeper at this position than they have been in recent seasons. In 2002 fourth-rounder Ben Taylor (weak side), fifth-rounder Andra Davis (middle) and fourth-rounder Kevin Bentley (strong side), the Browns have three young, aggressive players who can run and spell the

Moves

Key additions

DT Damian Gregory	Free agent/Dolphins
S Robert Griffith	Free agent/Vikings
LB Earl Holmes	Free agent/Steelers
RB J.J. Johnson	Free agent/Dolphins
DE Kenard Lang	Free agent/Redskins
WR Chris Sanders	Free agent/Titans
G Barry Stokes	Free agent/Packers
OT Ryan Tucker	Free agent/Rams

Key losses

DE Keith McKenzie	Free agent
G Jeremy McKinney	Expansion draft/Texans
OL Roman Oben	Free agent
TE O.J. Santiago	Free agent
LB Wali Rainer	Trade/Jaguars

Stadium/Media

Cleveland Browns Stadium (73,200, grass).

Ticket information: 440-891-5050.

Training site: 76 Lou Groza Boulevard, Berea, Ohio; 440-891-5000.

Radio: WMMS (100.7 FM).

Website: www.clevelandbrowns.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 7-9 (3rd in AFC Central); 5-5 in division; 6-7 in conference; 1-2 vs. NFC; 4-4 at home; 3-5 on road; 0-0 on artificial turf; 7-9 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Butch Davis' regular-season record: 7-9 in one season with Browns.

Davis' postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 12-36 (.250, ranks 31st in league in that span).

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*259.5	16	31
Rushing offense	*84.4	16	31
Passing offense	*175.1	15	28
Scoring offense	285	14	25
Total defense	*331.1	12	22
Rushing defense	*138.0	16	29
Passing defense	*193.1	6	10
Scoring defense	319	8	15
Takeaways	42	1	1
Giveaways	33	T10	T19
Turnover differential	9	3	T7
Sacks	43	T4	T10
Sacks allowed	51	15	28

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Butch Davis	Head coach	8	2
Bruce Arians	Offensive coordinator	10	2
Fogge Fazio	Defensive coordinator	15	2
Phil Banko	Defensive assistant	2	2
Todd Bowles	Defensive nickel package	3	2
Keith Butler	Linebackers	4	2
Pete Garcia	Football development	2	2
Steve Hagen	Tight ends	2	2
Ray Hamilton	Defensive line	16	2
Todd McNair	Running backs	2	2
Buddy Morris	Strength & conditioning	1	1
Chuck Pagano	Defensive backs	2	2
Rob Phillips	Asst. strength & cond.	2	2
Terry Robiskie	Wide receivers	21	2
Jerry Rosburg	Special teams	2	2
Carl Smith	Quarterbacks	16	2
Mike Sullivan	Offensive quality control	2	2
Larry Zierlein	Offensive line	2	2

REALIGNMENT reality

The new AFC North will be better for the Browns than the old AFC Central. The departure of the Titans and Jaguars as division foes removed from the annual schedule two teams that have been tough on the Browns. And though the Jaguars are sliding, the Titans could bounce back this season and again be a force in the AFC. The Browns, Steelers and Bengals—all northern teams—long have had fierce rivalries with each other, but none ever developed a true rivalry with the southern Titans or Jaguars. Keeping the Ravens—a franchise that, for obvious reasons, always will be hated in Cleveland—in the division will keep emotions high for Browns fans for each division game. But Baltimore is a shell of its former self, and Cincinnati has struggled mightily for more than a decade, so the Browns have no fear of them. But with the Steelers in the mix, division play always will be a challenge.



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

Jamir Miller's breakout year (a career-high 13 sacks) landed him a spot in his first Pro Bowl.

son game. Just as important, most of their returns haven't even come close to the end zone, which has hurt field position.

The Browns are hoping all of this will change with the arrival of Andre Davis. Though billed as a wide receiver, his initial contributions will be as a returner. He has the speed to break a return at any time.

GRADE: C

BOTTOM LINE Last season's 7-9 record paroled Browns fans from the pro football prison they have been in since 1995, when the previous Cleveland franchise left for Baltimore. And this year, with Butch Davis showing them the way, Cleveland fans finally may get their full-fledged release with a winning team that could end up in the playoffs. But for that to happen, Couch finally must come of age and the team must remain healthy. **TSN**

Steve King covers the Browns for the Medina County Gazette.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ● Kevin Johnson
■ Chris Sanders
LT ■ Ross Verba
□ Paul Zukauskas
LG ■ Melvin Fowler
□ Barry Stokes
C ■ Dave Wohlabaugh
■ Shaun O'Hara
RG ■ Tre' Johnson
□ Brad Bedell
RT ■ Ryan Tucker
■ Joaquin Gonzalez
TE ■ Rickey Dudley
■ Aaron Shea
TE ■ Darnell Sanders
□ Mark Campbell
WR ■ Quincy Morgan
■ Andre Davis
QB ■ Tim Couch
□ Kelly Holcomb
RB ■ William Green
■ James Jackson

Defense

LE ■ Kenard Lang
■ Arnold Miller
LT ● Gerard Warren
□ Marcus Spriggs
RT ■ Mark Smith
■ Orpheus Roye
RE ● Courtney Brown
■ Tyrone Rogers
SLB ● Jamir Miller
■ Kevin Bentley
MLB ■ Earl Holmes
■ Andra Davis
WLB ■ Dwayne Rudd
■ Ben Taylor
LCB ■ Corey Fuller
■ Anthony Henry
RCB ■ Daylon McCutcheon
■ Lewis Sanders
SS ● Robert Griffith
■ Earl Little
FS ■ Devin Bush
■ Michael Jameson

Specialists

K ● Phil Dawson
P ● Chris Gadocki
KR ■ Andre Davis
PR ■ Andre Davis
LS ● Ryan Kuehl
● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

BROWNS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
2	Couch, Tim	6-4/227	7-31-77	4	Kentucky	D1/99	16/16
10	Holcomb, Kelly	6-2/212	7-9-73	6	Middle Tennessee St.	FA/01	4/0
Running backs							
42	Fair, Carl	6-1/219	6-8-79	1	Alabama-Birmingham	FA/01	3/0
31	Green, William	6-0/221	12-17-79	R	Boston College	D1/02	—
29	Jackson, James	5-10/209	8-4-76	2	Miami (Fla.)	D3/01	11/10
28	Johnson, J.J.	6-1/230	4-20-74	4	Mississippi State	T-Mia/02	10/0
30	White, Jamel	5-9/208	2-11-77	3	South Dakota	FA/00	16/7
Receivers							
87	Davis, Andre	6-1/194	6-12-79	R	Virginia Tech	D2/02	—
88	Dawson, JaJuan	6-1/197	11-5-77	3	Tulane	D3b/00	14/0
82	Dudley, Rickey (TE)	6-6/255	7-15-72	7	Ohio State	UFA/01	4/4
85	Johnson, Kevin	5-11/195	7-15-76	4	Syracuse	D2a/99	16/16
84	King, Andre	5-11/195	11-26-73	2	Miami (Fla.)	D7b/01	7/0
48	Monroe, Rod (TE)	6-5/254	7-30-75	3	Cincinnati	FA/00	7/3
81	Morgan, Quincy	6-1/209	9-23-77	2	Kansas State	D2/01	16/9
86	Northcutt, Dennis	5-10/175	12-22-77	3	Arizona	D2/00	12/7
89	Sanders, Chris	6-1/190	5-8-72	8	Ohio State	UFA/02	4/0
49	Sanders, Darnell (TE)	6-6/267	3-16-79	R	Ohio State	D4c/02	—
80	Shea, Aaron (TE)	6-3/244	12-5-76	3	Michigan	D4b/00	12/5
Offensive linemen							
63	Bedell, Brad	6-4/299	2-12-77	3	Colorado	D6b/00	15/4
69	Chanoine, Roger (T)	6-4/295	8-11-76	3	Temple	FA/99	16/16
65	Fowler, Melvin (G)	6-3/300	3-31-79	R	Maryland	D3/02	—
68	Gonzalez, Joaquin (T)	6-3/293	9-7-79	R	Miami (Fla.)	D7/02	—
67	Johnson, Tre' (G)	6-2/326	8-30-71	9	Temple	FA/01	3/3
60	O'Hara, Shaun (C)	6-3/287	6-23-77	3	Rutgers	FA/00	16/4
79	Stokes, Barry (G)	6-4/310	12-20-73	5	Eastern Michigan	UFA/02	16/3
72	Tucker, Ryan (T)	6-5/305	6-12-75	6	Texas Christian	FA/02	15/15
77	Verba, Ross	6-4/308	10-31-73	6	Iowa	UFA/01	15/14
64	Wohlabaugh, Dave (C)	6-3/292	4-13-72	8	Syracuse	UFA/99	16/16
66	Zukauskas, Paul (T)	6-5/306	7-12-79	2	Boston College	D7a/01	1/0
Defensive linemen							
92	Brown, Courtney (E)	6-4/266	2-14-78	3	Penn State	D1/00	5/5
74	Claybrooks, Felipe	6-4/260	1-22-78	1	Georgia Tech	FA/01	4/0
75	Gregory, Damian (T)	6-3/305	1-21-77	3	Illinois State	W-Mia/02	2/0
73	Ham, Derrick (E)	6-4/270	3-23-75	2	Miami (Fla.)	FA/99	1/0
97	Kuehl, Ryan (T)	6-5/290	1-18-72	6	Virginia	FA/99	16/0
96	Lang, Kenard (E)	6-4/281	1-31-75	6	Miami (Fla.)	UFA/02	16/16
70	McKinley, Alvin (T)	6-3/292	6-9-78	3	Mississippi State	W-Car/01	7/0
98	Miller, Arnold (E)	6-3/239	1-3-75	4	LSU	FA/99	0/0
78	Rogers, Tyrone (E)	6-5/236	10-11-76	3	Alabama State	FA/99	16/10
99	Roye, Orpheus	6-4/313	1-21-74	7	Florida State	UFA/00	12/10
93	Smith, Mark (T)	6-4/294	8-28-74	6	Auburn	UFA/01	16/11
91	Spriggs, Marcus (T)	6-4/314	7-26-76	4	Troy State	D6a/99	—
94	Warren, Gerard (T)	6-4/322	7-25-78	2	Florida	D1/01	15/15
Linebackers							
59	Bentley, Kevin	6-0/243	12-29-79	R	Northwestern	D4a/02	—
52	Boyer, Brant	6-1/230	6-27-71	9	Arizona	FA/01	16/2
44	Davis, Andra	6-1/244	12-23-78	R	Florida	D5/02	—
55	Denman, Anthony	6-1/234	10-30-79	2	Notre Dame	W-Jac/01	11/0
50	Holmes, Earl	6-2/245	4-28-73	7	Florida A&M	UFA/02	16/16
51	Jones, Lenoy	6-1/236	9-25-74	7	Texas Christian	ED/99	7/1
95	Miller, Jamir	6-5/266	11-19-73	9	UCLA	UFA/99	16/16
57	Rudd, Dwayne	6-2/237	2-3-76	6	Alabama	UFA/01	16/16
58	Taylor, Ben	6-2/236	8-31-78	R	Virginia Tech	D4b/02	—
Defensive backs							
36	Akins, Chris	5-11/195	11-29-76	4	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	W-GB/00	15/0
23	Bush, Devin (S)	6-0/210	7-3-73	8	Florida State	FA/01	16/7
26	Carter, Dyshod	5-10/197	6-18-78	1	Kansas State	FA/01	5/0
27	Chapman, Lamar	6-0/186	11-6-76	3	Kansas State	D5b/00	1/0
25	Fuller, Corey	5-10/205	5-1-71	8	Florida State	UFA/99	16/16
24	Griffith, Robert (S)	5-11/198	11-30-70	9	San Diego State	UFA/02	10/9
37	Henry, Anthony (CB)	6-0/198	11-3-76	2	South Florida	D4/01	16/2
22	Jameson, Michael	5-11/186	7-14-79	2	Texas A&M	D6/01	0/0
20	Little, Earl	6-0/198	3-10-73	5	Miami (Fla.)	W-NO/99	16/16
33	McCutcheon, D. (CB)	5-10/180	12-9-76	4	Southern California	D3a/99	16/15
38	Moreland, Earthw'd (CB)	5-11/185	6-13-77	3	Georgia Southern	FA/01	2/0
56	Smith, Marquis	6-2/213	1-13-75	4	California	D3b/99	14/2
Specialists							
4	Dawson, Phil (K)	5-11/190	1-23-75	4	Texas	FA/99	16/0
17	Gadocki, Chris (P)	6-1/200	2-7-70	12	Clemson	UFA/99	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: QB Josh Booley, TE Mark Campbell, WR Kwame Cavil, TE Chris Eitzmann, OL Gaylon Hyder, OL Richard Mercier, DB Lewis Sanders, DE Mark Word. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition; ED—expansion draft pick.



Steelers

BY GERRY DULAC

On January 15, 1995, a gray, misty day at Three Rivers Stadium, a catastrophic event occurred in the final game of Bill Cowher's third season as coach of the Steelers: Neil O'Donnell's low, last-minute pass to Barry Foster was knocked down just inside the end zone and the Steelers, heavy favorites to advance to the Super Bowl, lost to the Chargers in the AFC championship game.

One year later, determined and resolute, the Steelers bounced back by returning to the AFC championship game and then landing back in the Super Bowl for the first time since their glory days of the 1970s.

"That same feeling you felt and that same disappointment you felt was the same fuel that you will use to come back," Cowher says.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 9 at N.E. (Mon.)	9:00	Nov. 10 ATLANTA	1:00
Sept. 15 OAKLAND	8:30	Nov. 17 at Tennessee	1:00
Sept. 22 Open date		Nov. 24 CINCINNATI	1:00
Sept. 29 CLEVELAND	1:00	Dec. 1 at Jacksonville	1:00
Oct. 6 at New Orleans	1:00	Dec. 8 HOUSTON	1:00
Oct. 13 at Cincinnati	1:00	Dec. 15 CAROLINA	1:00
Oct. 21 IND. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 23 at T.B. (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 27 at Baltimore	1:00	Dec. 29 BALTIMORE	1:00
Nov. 3 at Cleveland	1:00	Strength of schedule: 31st	

Cowher did not deliver that message to his players after the 1994 season. He used it last January, after the heavily favored Steelers were upset in front of their home crowd at Heinz Field by the surging Patriots in the AFC championship game.

Like in 1995, the Steelers are hoping to rebound from their disappointment and get to the Super Bowl. Certainly, they have factors in their favor as they head into the 2002 season: 20 of 22 starters returning from a team that was 14-4 (including playoffs) plus a charitable realignment in the AFC North.

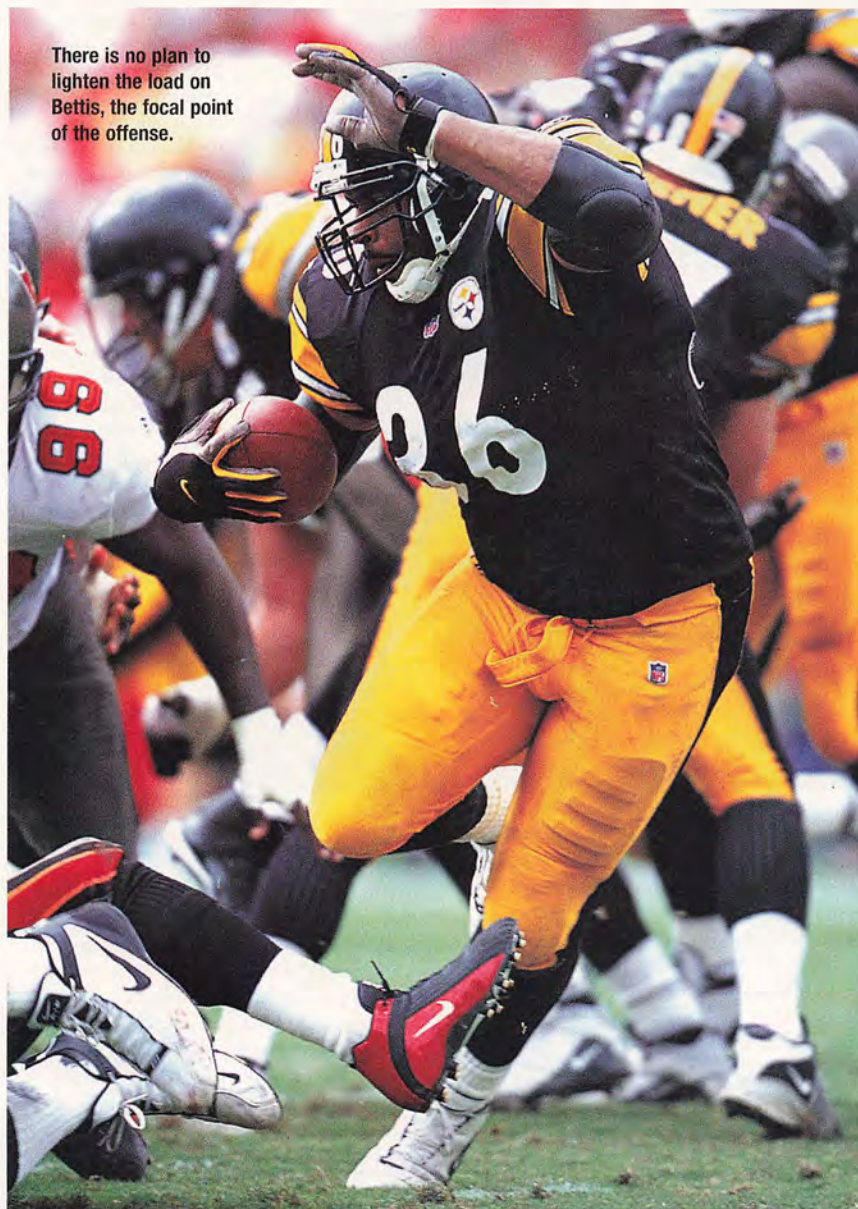
Last year, the Steelers were thrilled about the steps they took—winning five more games than the previous season, an AFC-best 13 regular-season wins, and getting back to the playoffs for the first time since the 1997 season. This year, there is only one satisfying goal.

"Put it like this," says wide receiver Troy Edwards, "if we don't go to the Super Bowl, it will be a disappointing season."

COACHING Strategies—Former tight ends coach Mike Mularkey was promoted to offensive coordinator before last season, and he helped the Steelers develop the NFL's No. 3 offense.

The team did not change its style of run-

There is no plan to lighten the load on Bettis, the focal point of the offense.



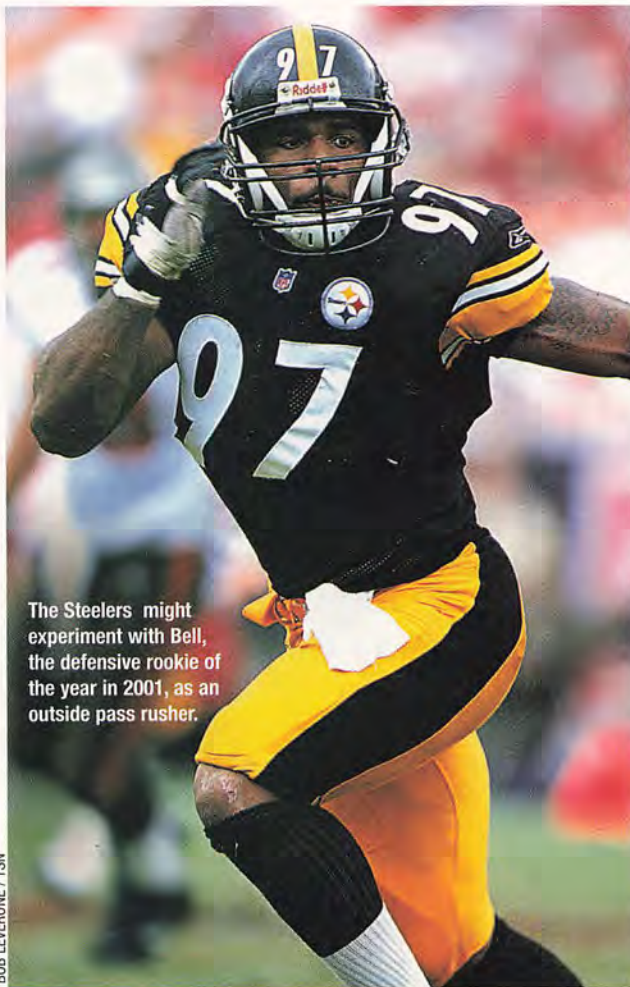
BOB LEVERONE / TSN

ning the ball but dramatically altered the way it operates in the passing game. Mularkey simplified the approach by taking away the guesswork required of quarterback Kordell Stewart and the team's young wide receivers. He installed a lot of timing patterns that required Stewart to anticipate and throw to a spot. The result was two 1,000-yard receivers—Plaxico Burress and Hines Ward—and a Pro Bowl appearance for Stewart.

Mularkey was not reluctant to use gadget plays to confuse defenses. The addition of second-round pick Antwaan Randle El, a

former college quarterback converting to receiver in the NFL, should increase the team's arsenal of tricks.

Defensive coordinator Tim Lewis will concentrate on improving the team's ability to defend the pass, something it didn't always do well, despite leading the NFL in total defense. The principal area of concern is inside linebacker, where Lewis needs to identify a coverage player in the dime defense. Lewis wants more speed, so the Steelers acquired James Farrior, who can help against teams that like to throw to their running backs.



The Steelers might experiment with Bell, the defensive rookie of the year in 2001, as an outside pass rusher.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Style—One of the things Cowher did last season was bring in several assistant coaches who were former players, and not far removed from their playing days. The approach has been successful.

Offensive line coach Russ Grimm does a good job communicating with the players, especially in team meetings. His approach is simple and easy, but it works. He is able to relate his experiences to the players. On the practice field, Grimm takes the time to step in and demonstrate how to play the position for the younger players on the line.

Tight ends coach Ken Whisenhunt is a good fit in Mularkey's offensive framework. Whisenhunt is involved in some of the game-planning and, like Mularkey, he is innovative and unafraid to be imaginative.

Former wideout Kenny Jackson relates well to the team's pair of former No. 1 picks at wide receiver—Burrell and Edwards.

Perhaps no player benefited more from having an assistant coach than Stewart. The hiring of Tom Clements as quarterbacks coach—the team's first since 1973—had an immediate impact. He works to fine-tune Stewart's handoffs and pitches but also does a good job of keeping Stewart prepared to run the offense.

Cowher wants former NFL players in

coaching roles because he feels they can relate best to today's players.

GRADE: A

OFFENSE

Quarterbacks—

Stewart matured and developed last season because the coaches tried to put him in positions where he could succeed.

Mularkey's offensive scheme is geared toward Stewart. Stewart doesn't get bogged down going through progressions, which explains why the quarterback completed 60.2 percent of his passes for 3,109 yards last season.

As Stewart gets more confident, his mechanics improve. He doesn't hesitate on slants over the middle because he knows where he is going with the ball. And he doesn't try to force throws into double coverage because he has the freedom to run with the ball, which he didn't have when Kevin Gilbride was the coordinator.

By the end of last season, opponents had new respect for Stewart. Defenses stopped playing eight or nine men in the box, with their cornerbacks in single coverage. They couldn't focus strictly on stopping the run while daring Stewart to beat them through the air, because he was doing it.

Tommy Maddox was the No. 2 quarterback. He impressed the coaches with his anticipation and his ability to throw to

spots. That makes him a good fit for Mularkey's offense.

Maddox will remain the backup, unless Tee Martin surprises everyone in training camp. Martin is athletic and strong-armed. He had a chance to become the No. 2 quarterback last season but did not deliver. He needs to have a better understanding of the offense to gain confidence in his throwing ability. **GRADE: B+**

Running backs—Jerome Bettis proved last season that, if healthy, he's still one of the top backs in the NFL. But that's the key for the Steelers—if he is healthy.

Bettis was leading the NFL with 1,072 rushing yards after 11 games, but a hip/knee injury put him on the shelf for the last five regular-season games and first playoff game. The injury even cut into his offseason conditioning work.

A year ago, Bettis arrived at training camp healthy and in great shape, and it showed in the regular season. He was as strong and punishing as ever, but he also was more nimble and broke off more long runs.

Bettis will remain the focal point of the offense and the team has no plans to lighten his load, even though it has quality backups in Amos Zereoue and Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala.

Zereoue is the perfect counter for Bettis. He is faster, shifter and can stop-and-start as well as any back in the league. The Steelers like to use Zereoue's cutback skills against teams with fast-flowing defenses.

Fuamatu-Ma'afala is a clone of Bettis. He has great leg strength that allows him to gain extra yards at the line of scrimmage. However, he needs to learn a little patience. Sometimes, Fuamatu-Ma'afala turns upfield too quickly, not allowing his blockers to set him up for a longer run.

With Jon Witman gone, Dan Kreider steps in as the starting fullback. The team's rookie of the year in 2000, Kreider is an explosive blocker at the point of impact and uses his squat build to get under a defender and drive him backward. **GRADE: A**

Receivers—The team needs to replace

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
1-30	Kendall Simmons	OT	Auburn	Not expected to start right away but could—at right guard.
2-62	Antwaan Randle El	WR	Indiana	Mike Mularkey, a master of innovation, will find ways to use him.
3-94	Chris Hope	S	Florida State	Smart and instinctive but lacks great cover speed.
4-128	Larry Foote	LB	Michigan	Not big or fast, but team likes his aggressiveness and ball skills.
5-166	Verron Haynes	RB	Georgia	Backup FB for now, but he'll likely take some snaps at RB, too.
6-202	Lee Mays	WR	Texas-El Paso	Lacks the blazing speed probably needed to make the final roster.
7-212	LaVar Glover	CB	Cincinnati	Will try to win a spot as the fourth cornerback.
7-242	Brett Keisel	DE	Brigham Young	Needs to add weight to have a shot—and even then it's a long one.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-24	Chad Scott	DB	Maryland	Starter with Steelers
'98-26	Alan Faneca	G	LSU	Starter with Steelers
'99-13	Troy Edwards	WR	Louisiana Tech	Backup with Steelers
'00-8	Plaxico Burrell	WR	Michigan State	Starter with Steelers
'01-19	Casey Hampton	DT	Texas	Starter with Steelers

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

When you talk Pittsburgh Steelers, you talk defense. **Tim Lewis** did a fantastic job of getting this unit prepared and maintaining their intensity level each week. Offensive coordinators had no answers for their swarming style and could not match up with the speed. ... The obvious impact player was **Kendrell Bell**. The one word that best describes this kid is explosive. **Joey Porter** and **Jason Gildon**, the outside 'backers, know how to get to the quarterback. With Porter improving his play against the run, this tandem is as good as it gets in this system. ... **Chad Scott** has talent but went into a three- or four-game slide where he was taking too many chances trying to read the quarterback rather than playing the receiver. **Lee**



THE STEELERS

Flowers seems to be the team spokesman, which was OK when they were winning. But as soon as they lost, he was the first to point a finger. He is a physical tackler who should be pointing his finger at the lack of cover skills he showed. ... **Kordell Stewart** had an MVP season and was a key factor in them winning consistently. I feel like Stewart finally has come to grips with the fact that his mobility enhances his ability to play quarterback and does not detract from his ability to be a quarterback. ... Not only could you see the influence of new line coach **Russ Grimm** on the overall offense, but the improvement of the line—as well as the development of their young backups—was tremendous.

Bobby Shaw, who was the slot receiver on third downs. Eventually, Randle El is expected to fill that role. He is intelligent and instinctively knows how to get open.

Don't look for Edwards to fill the void. He runs sloppy routes and doesn't always get open. Plus, his hands are still a liability.

Otherwise, this team is in good shape at wide receiver with the sudden development of Burress and the steady play of Ward. With 1,008 and 1,003 receiving yards respectively, Burress and Ward topped even the dynamic duo of Lynn Swann and John Stallworth by becoming the first pair of 1,000-yard receivers in the same season for the Steelers.

The 6-5 Burress is a dangerous single-coverage matchup for most defenses. He

uses his size to outmaneuver smaller cornerbacks and his deceptive speed to outrun bigger cornerbacks. Burress has learned how to position his body to make tough catches. Defenses have to cheat a strong safety to his side to stop him.

Ward, who had a team-high 94 catches, is the Steelers' most sure-handed receiver. He also is a devastating blocker. The Steelers require their receivers to do a lot of downfield blocking, and nobody does it better than Ward.

Edwards is a potentially explosive runner who can stop, change directions and start again as well as anyone in the league. However, his lack of production may mean his days with this team are dwindling.

Lenzie Jackson, who could take Edwards' spot on the roster, reminds the team of former Steeler Yancey Thigpen because of his size (6-0, 184) and the way he uses his body to make catches. **GRADE: B**

Line—Jeff Hartings, a former guard with the Lions, switched to center in 2001, his first season with the Steelers, replacing the retired Dermontti Dawson. A powerful blocker and an excellent technician, he started 16 games and helped turn the interior of the line into a strength.

Left guard Alan Faneca made the Pro Bowl, and for good reason. His strength and athleticism powered the league's No. 1 running game. Faneca is the team's best pulling guard, and the Steelers use him as the lead blocker on several of their counter plays when they want to wipe out an outside or middle linebacker.

Left tackle Wayne Gandy does not get the credit he deserves. He was overlooked in the Pro Bowl selection process despite shutting down some of the best defensive ends in the league.

Right guard Rich Tytski was released after the draft. Either Keydrick Vincent, an undrafted free agent in 2001, or first-round pick Kendall Simmons, who played out of

position at left tackle at Auburn, will start in that spot. Grimm and Cowher are excited about Vincent, who is big (6-5, 330), strong and fast. He just needs to learn better technique, which is where Grimm can help. Simmons is an aggressive and impressive run blocker. He needs refining as a pass blocker.

Center Chukky Okobi, a fifth-round choice in 2001, also will get a chance to claim the right guard spot. Okobi is tough and has long arms that he uses to negate pass-rushing linemen.

Right tackle Marvel Smith really improved his pass-protection skills under Grimm. He no longer lunges or leads with his helmet, and he shows better balance. Oliver Ross doesn't have great feet, but he is a natural backup at right tackle. **GRADE: B+**

DEFENSE Line—Nose tackle Casey Hampton, the club's No. 1 pick last season, made a big difference in the run defense last season. His stay-at-home style was perfect in the middle of the 3-4.

A squat 6-1, 321 pounds, Hampton is hard to move. He has great leg strength and plays low to the ground, making it difficult for guards or centers to block him. By clogging the middle, Hampton creates space for the inside linebackers to make a lot of tackles.

Hampton began the season splitting time with Kendrick Clancy, but that rotation dwindled as Hampton developed quickly. Still, Clancy provides depth at the position.

Kimo von Oelhoffen moved from tackle to end, and that helped improve the

2001 results

Sept. 9	at Jacksonville	L	3-21
Sept. 23	Open date		
Sept. 30	at Buffalo	W	20-3
Oct. 7	CINCINNATI	W	16-7
Oct. 14	at Kansas City	W	20-17
Oct. 21	at Tampa Bay	W	17-10
Oct. 29	TENNESSEE	W	34-7
Nov. 4	BALTIMORE	L	10-13
Nov. 11	at Cle. (OT)	W	15-12
Nov. 18	JACKSONVILLE	W	20-7
Nov. 25	at Tennessee	W	34-24
Dec. 2	MINNESOTA	W	21-16
Dec. 9	N.Y. JETS	W	18-7
Dec. 16	at Baltimore	W	26-21
Dec. 23	DETROIT	W	47-14
Dec. 30	at Cin. (OT)	L	23-26
Jan. 6	CLEVELAND	W	28-7
Jan. 20	BALTIMORE*	W	27-10
Jan. 27	NEW ENGLAND*	L	17-24

*AFC playoff game.

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. James Farrior's speed is an upgrade at inside linebacker. He'll do a better job of covering running backs on third down. Earl Holmes couldn't, and that's why he is gone.
2. The players expect to get back to the AFC title game, but coach Bill Cowher's most difficult challenge will be keeping them focused until that point.
3. Rookie Antwaan Randle El will command opponents' attention because of the endless possibilities of how he can be deployed in the offense.
4. If K Todd Peterson can't handle the tricky wind conditions at Heinz Field, the special teams will wind up at the same place as last season—somewhere at the bottom of the Allegheny.
5. Despite his contributions as a blocker, runner and special teams player, Troy Edwards needs to produce receptions or he could be history.



Moves

Key additions

TE John Allred	Free agent
LB James Farrior	Free agent/Jets
K Todd Peterson	Free agent/Chiefs

Key losses

WR Will Blackwell	Free agent
K Kris Brown	Free agent/Texans
OL Roger Duffy	Free agent
LB Earl Holmes	Free agent/Browns
WR Bobby Shaw	Free agent/Jaguars
CB Jason Simmons	Free agent/Texans
G Rich Tylski	Free agent
FB Jon Witman	Free agent

Stadium/Media

Heinz Field (64,450, grass).

Ticket information: 412-323-1200.

Training site: St. Vincent College, Latrobe, Pa.; 412-539-8515.

Radio: WDVE-FM (102.7).

Website: www.steelers.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 13-3 (1st in AFC Central); 7-3 in division; 10-3 in conference; 3-0 vs. NFC; 7-1 at home; 6-2 on road; 1-0 on artificial turf; 12-3 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Defeated Baltimore, 27-10, in AFC semifinal game; lost to New England, 24-17, in AFC championship game.

Bill Cowher's regular-season record: 99-61 in 10 seasons with Steelers.

Cowher's postseason record: 6-7 in seven appearances with Steelers (0-1 in Super Bowl).

Team record last five years: 46-34 (.575, ranks T10th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 2000.

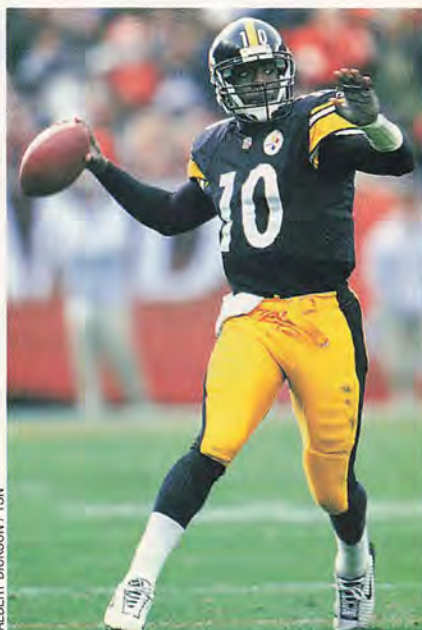
Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*367.9	2	3
Rushing offense	*173.4	1	1
Passing offense	*194.6	10	21
Scoring offense	352	4	7
Total defense	*258.6	1	1
Rushing defense	*74.7	1	1
Passing defense	*183.9	2	4
Scoring defense	212	1	3
Takeaways	28	T6	T16
Giveaways	21	T1	T2
Turnover differential	7	T4	T9
Sacks	55	1	1
Sacks allowed	31	7	11

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Cowher	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Bill Cowher	Head coach	18	11
Mike Mularkey	Offensive coordinator	9	7
Tim Lewis	Defensive coordinator	8	8
Mike Archer	Linebackers	11	4
Tom Clements	Quarterbacks	6	2
Chet Fuhrman	Strength & conditioning	11	11
Russ Grimm	Offensive line	11	2
Dick Hoak	Running backs	31	31
Kenny Jackson	Wide receivers	2	2
John Mitchell	Defensive line	12	9
Willy Robinson	Defensive backs	9	3
Kevin Spencer	Special teams	12	1
Ken Whisenhunt	Tight ends	6	2



ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

Stewart's emergence last season was due in large part to the coaching he received.

defense's overall speed. As the season progressed, von Oelhoffen became more comfortable in his new role and played at a high level. Though he finished the season strong, he probably will be replaced on passing downs by second-year end Rodney Bailey.

Bailey impressed the coaches last season with his rapid development. He beefed up to 300 pounds without losing any quickness and showed surprising pass-rushing skills for a rookie. If he continues to improve, he could push von Oelhoffen out and get even more playing time.

Without question, the biggest influence on this unit last year was the improvement of end Aaron Smith. This will be Smith's third season, and he is on the verge of stardom. He is a bull-rushing end who plays like a tackle in run situations, which the Steelers require of their ends in the 3-4. Smith is quick enough and athletic enough to beat right tackles to the outside. But he uses his strength and quick first step to get inside penetration and disrupt running plays in the backfield. **GRADE: B-**

Linebackers—Farrior steps right in for Earl Holmes, the team's leading tackler for the last three seasons. Farrior is not as physical as Holmes, but he is faster and more effective in pass situations.

If Farrior has problems against the run, Cowher won't be afraid to use John Fiala, an undersized overachiever who is the special teams captain. Fiala lacks quickness and agility, but he is tough, smart and a hard-hitter. Rookie Larry Foote should improve the depth inside.

The other starter at inside linebacker is Kendrell Bell, who was the NFL's defensive rookie of the year in 2001. Bell's big hits in training camp last summer convinced the

coaches they could not keep him out of the lineup. However, Bell was slow to pick up the pass-coverage schemes, so the Steelers put him in positions where he didn't have to be responsible for those assignments. This year, the team is experimenting with using Bell at outside linebacker, as a pass-rushing end, and moving outside linebacker Joey Porter inside in passing situations.

That would allow Bell to put more pressure on the quarterback and let Porter match up with a running back or tight end in pass coverage.

One player the team won't disrupt is Pro Bowl outside linebacker Jason Gildon, who had a team-high 12 sacks last season. Gildon's backup, Clark Haggans, is another converted defensive end whose specialty is rushing the passer. The team is not afraid to use Haggans in any situation. **GRADE: B+**

Secondary—The leader of the unit remains cornerback Chad Scott, who led the team with five interceptions, including two he returned for touchdowns. However, he can be a liability at times because he gambles too much. When he does that, Scott gets in trouble, leaving himself vulnerable to hitch passes and pump fakes down the sideline.

When Scott plays with discipline, he is one of the top corners in the AFC. He has the speed and athleticism to cover receivers, and the size and strength to play the run.

The same is true of Dewayne Washington, the other starting corner, who is not as big as Scott but is a sure tackler against the run. Washington also has terrific coverage skills, but he sometimes loses body position when the ball is in the air.

The team considers re-signing Deshaea Townsend one of its most important offseason moves. Townsend is the No. 3 corner, but he is a regular in the dime defense because he has excellent coverage skills. Free safety Brent Alexander will slide to cornerback when the team needs a fourth.

Strong safety Lee Flowers is one of the team's top tacklers. The Steelers were hoping to draft a strong safety to back up Flowers, but they chose Florida State's Chris Hope, who is more of a free safety, a center fielder who reacts to the ball. Right now, Hope is slated for special teams. But if he proves he can make plays in the secondary, he has a chance to beat out Alexander. **GRADE: B**

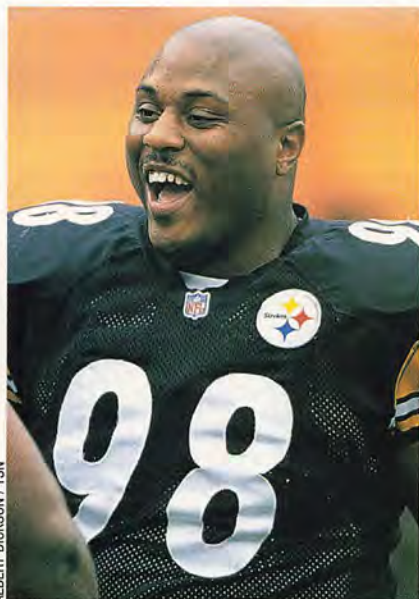
SPECIAL TEAMS This was the team's biggest weakness last season, and it cost the Steelers a trip to the Super Bowl. The Patriots scored two special teams touchdowns—one on a punt return, the other on a blocked field-goal attempt—in the AFC title game. Cowher wasted little time in firing special teams coach Jay Hayes.

But the problems went beyond Hayes' control. Kris Brown missed 14 of 44 field-goal attempts and three extra points. Josh Miller had three punts blocked or altered. Opponents averaged 11.9 yards per punt return.

So Cowher hired Kevin Spencer as his new special teams coach and picked up

REALIGNMENT reality

With 20 of 22 starters returning from a team that had the best regular-season record in the AFC, it probably doesn't matter which division the Steelers play in. Realignment almost guarantees them another division title, because they are playing in the AFC North with the Browns, Bengals and Ravens. In recent years, each season promised four tough games against the Jaguars and Titans, but those teams are gone (to the AFC South) and so is the old AFC Central. The Steelers' biggest threat will be the young and well-coached Browns. If Cleveland continues to improve, the Steelers-Browns rivalry could return to where it was during the 1970s and '80s. However, the Browns, Ravens and Bengals all have weaknesses that the Steelers can exploit. And realignment will mean a more facile travel schedule. Cleveland is a two-hour bus trip; Cincinnati and Baltimore are easy flights. <None>



Hampton's stay-at-home style was a perfect fit in the middle of the Steelers' 3-4 defense.

Todd Peterson to replace Brown, who signed with the Texans. Peterson's biggest chore will be getting accustomed to the conditions at Heinz Field, where Brown struggled the most.

The Steelers don't blame Miller for the special teams woes. He has a strong leg, but what the team likes most about him is his ability to place punts along the sidelines.

The Steelers hope they improved their return units with the selection of Randle El, whose jitterbug style makes him a natural for punt returns. Edwards did a nice job on kickoff and punt returns last season, and he will be in the kick-return mix. **GRADE: D**

BOTTOM LINE The Steelers should be one of the best teams in the AFC. All the offensive pieces are in place, and the defense should be as good or better than the one that led the NFL last season. However, the team needs Bettis to stay healthy, even though the passing game should take a lot of the burden off The Bus. **TSN**

Gerry Dulac covers the Steelers for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ Plaxico Burress
□ Lenzie Jackson

LT ■ Wayne Gandy
■ Oliver Ross

LG ■ Alan Faneca
■ Oliver Ross

C ■ Jeff Hartings
■ Chukky Okobi

RG ■ Keydrick Vincent
■ Kendall Simmons

RT ■ Marvel Smith
■ Oliver Ross

TE ■ Mark Bruener
□ Jerome Tuman

WR ■ Hines Ward
■ Troy Edwards

QB ■ Kordell Stewart
□ Tommy Maddox

RB ■ Jerome Bettis
■ Amos Zereoue

FB ■ Dan Kreider
□ Verron Haynes

Defense

LE ■ Aaron Smith
□ Chris Combs

NT ■ Casey Hampton
□ Kendrick Clancy

RE ■ Kimo von Oelhoffen
■ Rodney Bailey

LLB ■ Jason Gildon
■ Clark Haggans

ILB ■ James Farrior
□ Mike Jones

ILB ■ Kendrick Bell
■ John Fiala

RLB ■ Joey Porter
■ Clark Haggans

CB ■ Chad Scott
□ LaVar Glover

CB ■ Dewayne Washington
■ Deshea Townsend

SS ■ Lee Flowers
□ Chris Hope

FS ■ Brent Alexander
■ Mike Logan

Specialists

K ■ Todd Peterson
P ■ Josh Miller

KR ■ Troy Edwards
PR ■ Antwaan Randle El

LS ■ Mike Schneck

■ Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

STEELERS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
8	Maddox, Tommy	6-4/220	9-2-71	6	UCLA	FA/01	5/0
17	Martin, Tee	6-2/225	7-25-78	3	Tennessee	D5b/00	1/0
10	Stewart, Kordell	6-1/217	10-16-72	8	Colorado	D2/95	16/16

Running backs

36	Bettis, Jerome	5-11/255	2-16-72	10	Notre Dame	T-SL/96	11/11
33	Bowers, R.J. (FB)	6-0/245	2-10-74	2	Grove City (Pa.)	FA/01	3/0
45	Fuamatu-Ma'afala, Chris	6-0/255	3-4-77	5	Utah	D6a/98	16/5
34	Haynes, Verron (FB)	5-9/224	2-17-79	R	Georgia	D5/02	—
35	Kreider, Dan (FB)	5-11/242	3-11-77	3	New Hampshire	FA/00	13/1
21	Zereoue, Amos	5-8/207	10-8-76	4	West Virginia	D3c/99	14/0

Receivers

87	Bruener, Mark (TE)	6-4/261	9-16-72	8	Washington	D1/95	9/9
80	Burress, Plaxico	6-5/229	8-12-77	3	Michigan State	D1/00	16/16
48	Cushing, Matt (TE)	6-4/260	7-2-75	4	Illinois	FA/98	13/3
81	Edwards, Troy	5-9/192	4-7-77	4	Louisiana Tech	D1/99	16/0
85	Geason, Corey (TE)	6-4/270	8-12-75	3	Tulane	FA/99	7/0
83	Jackson, Lenzie	6-0/191	6-17-77	4	Arizona State	FA/00	11/0
16	Mays, Lee	6-2/192	9-18-78	R	Texas-El Paso	D6/02	—
82	Randle El, Antwaan	5-10/184	8-17-79	R	Indiana	D2/02	—
84	Tuman, Jerome (TE)	6-4/270	3-24-76	4	Michigan	D5a/99	16/7
86	Ward, Hines	6-0/200	3-8-76	5	Georgia	D3b/98	16/16

Offensive linemen

66	Faneca, Alan (G)	6-5/305	12-7-76	5	Louisiana State	D1/98	15/15
72	Gandy, Wayne (T)	6-5/310	2-10-71	9	Auburn	UFA/99	15/15
64	Hartings, Jeff (G)	6-3/295	9-7-72	7	Penn State	UFA/01	16/16
78	Nkwenti, Mathias (T)	6-3/300	5-11-78	2	Temple	D4/01	1/0
56	Okobi, Chukky (G)	6-1/310	11-18-78	2	Purdue	D5/01	1/0
79	Ross, Oliver (T)	6-5/309	9-27-74	3	Iowa State	FA/99	16/8
54	Schneck, Mike (C)	6-1/246	8-4-77	4	Wisconsin	FA/99	16/0
71	Simmons, Kendall (G)	6-3/313	3-11-79	R	Auburn	D1/02	—
77	Smith, Marvel (T)	6-5/308	8-6-78	3	Arizona State	D2/00	16/16
68	Vincent, Keydrick (G)	6-5/330	4-13-78	2	Mississippi	FA/01	5/1

Defensive linemen

94	Bailey, Rodney (E)	6-3/300	10-7-79	2	Ohio State	D6a/01	16/1
96	Clancy, Kendrick (T)	6-1/289	9-17-78	3	Mississippi	D3a/00	16/6
73	Combs, Chris (E)	6-2/286	12-15-76	3	Duke	D6a/00	2/0
98	Hampton, Casey (T)	6-1/321	9-3-77	2	Texas	D1/01	16/9
99	Keisel, Brett (E)	6-5/269	9-19-78	R	Brigham Young	D7/02	—
91	Smith, Aaron (E)	6-5/300	4-9-76	4	Northern Colorado	D4/99	16/16
67	von Oelhoffen, Kimo	6-4/300	1-30-71	9	Boise State	UFA/00	15/15

Linebackers

97	Bell, Kendrell	6-1/254	7-17-80	2	Georgia	D2/01	16/16
50	Farrior, James	6-2/244	1-6-75	6	Virginia	UFA/02	16/16
57	Fiala, John	6-3/237	11-25-73	5	Washington	FA/98	16/0
47	Foote, Larry	6-1/234	6-12-80	R	Michigan	D4/02	—
92	Gildon, Jason	6-4/250	7-31-72	9	Oklahoma State	D3a/94	16/16
53	Haggans, Clark (E)	6-1/251	1-10-77	3	Colorado State	D5a/00	16/1
51	Jones, Mike A.	6-1/247	4-15-69	12	Missouri	UFA/01	15/0
90	Kurpeikis, Justin	6-3/254	7-17-77	2	Penn State	FA/01	3/0
55	Porter, Joey	6-3/249	3-22-77	4	Colorado State	D3a/99	15/15

Defensive backs

27	Alexander, Brent (S)	5-11/200	7-10-71	9	Tennessee State	FA/00	16/16
41	Flowers, Lee (S)	6-0/214	1-14-73	8	Georgia Tech	D5a/95	15/15
23	Glover, Lavar (CB)	5-9/175	12-17-78	R	Cincinnati	D7a/02	—
28	Hope, Chris (S)	6-0/204	9-29-80	R	Florida State	D3/02	—
31	Logan, Mike	6-1/209	9-15-74	6	West Virginia	UFA/01	16/1
22	Poteat, Hank (CB)	5-10/198	8-30-77	3	Pittsburgh	D3b/00	13/0
30	Scott, Chad	6-1/201	9-6-74	6	Maryland	D1/97	15/15
26	Townsend, Deshea (CB)	5-10/191	9-8-75	5	Alabama	D4a/98	16/1
20	Washington, D. (CB)	6-0/193	12-27-72	9	North Carolina State	UFA/98	16/16

Specialists

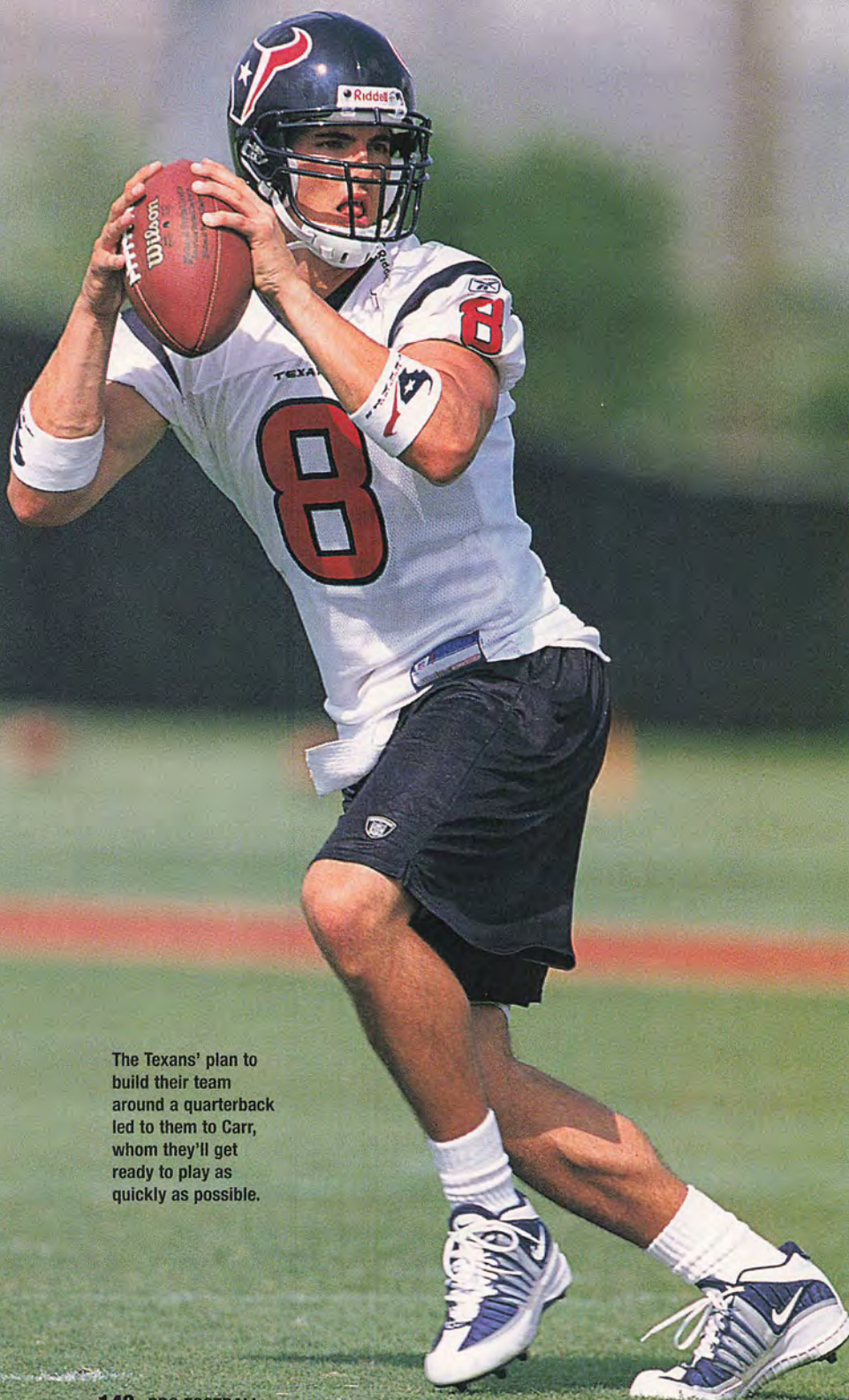
4	Miller, Josh (P)	6-4/220	7-14-70	7	Arizona	FA/96	16/0
2	Peterson, Todd (K)	5-10/177	2-4-70	8	Georgia	UFA/02	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: TE John Allred, DB Payton Williams.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Texans



The Texans' plan to build their team around a quarterback led to them to Carr, whom they'll get ready to play as quickly as possible.

BY CARLTON THOMPSON

The down time between the Oilers' last game in Houston and the Texans' first play only will be six years, but for the city's football-crazed fans, that period of time might as well have been 60 years. Since the Oilers left for Tennessee, an insatiable hunger for a return of the NFL has developed, and now the feeding frenzy begins.

The NFL's 32nd team is up and running.

Through the expansion draft, free agency and the college draft, the Texans have stocked their roster with enough well-known players to raise expectations beyond what seems reasonable for an expansion franchise.

Tony Boselli, Ryan Young, Steve McKinney, Gary Walker, Kailee Wong, Jamie Sharper and Aaron Glenn are just a handful of Texans who could play for any team in the league. But there are enough unrecognizable names to stand as a reminder of why expansion teams typically crawl so long before taking their first step toward respectability.

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	DALLAS	8:30	Nov. 10	at Tennessee	1:00
Sept. 15	at San Diego	4:15	Nov. 17	JACKSONVILLE	4:15
Sept. 22	INDIANAPOLIS	1:00	Nov. 24	N.Y. GIANTS	4:15
Sept. 29	at Philadelphia	1:00	Dec. 1	at Indianapolis	4:05
Oct. 6	Open date		Dec. 8	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Oct. 13	BUFFALO	1:00	Dec. 15	BALTIMORE	1:00
Oct. 20	at Cleveland	4:05	Dec. 22	at Washington	1:00
Oct. 27	at Jacksonville	4:15	Dec. 29	TENNESSEE	1:00
Nov. 3	CINCINNATI	1:00	Strength of schedule: 32nd		

Expectations range from a two- or three-victory season to a spot in the playoffs in their first year. Realistically, the Texans will be fortunate to win four or five games. Judging by ticket sales—about 93 percent of capacity at new Reliant Stadium is gone—the fans don't care how competitive the Texans are in the inaugural season.

After six years without an NFL team, bad football is better than no football at all.

"To put together a blueprint for a championship, it's going to take time, patience, courage and conviction to stay the course," Texans coach Dom Capers says. "You might not be as good in the first and second year, but hopefully that pays dividends for you in that third, fourth and fifth year."

COACHING Strategies—Capers' first hire was offensive coordinator Chris Palmer, who was fired after two seasons as the coach of the expansion Browns.

Palmer has a sterling reputation as a developer of young quarterbacks. He did a solid job in his only other stint as an NFL offensive coordinator, overseeing a Jacksonville offense that averaged 24.6 points per game during his two seasons.

Palmer uses a variety of formations and sets and does a good job of tailoring his offense to the available talent, an important characteristic considering the Texans will have many holes.

Capers is giving control of the offense to

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

If I had had the option, I would have taken **Joey Harrington** (with the No. 1 draft pick). That's not to degrade **David Carr**. I just like Harrington's ability to make a play on the move. Carr is a little slow-footed. And it scares me to hear that as soon as they get the guy, they're already changing his release. ... I wouldn't have signed (**Tony**) **Boselli**. Now, he's a great guy and you love all the intangibles with him, but that's a lot of dough to tie up in a guy who may or may not be there. ... As far as playmakers on offense, I would think (rookie) **Jabar Gaffney** has a chance to do that. **Corey Bradford** has never really done it, but athletically he would have a chance. **Jermaine Lewis**, as a returner, has a chance to be a big-time playmaker. ... They've

OUTSIDE

Gaffney



VIEW

THE TEXANS

got a chance to be pretty good on defense. They have some players—**Gary Walker**, **Seth Payne**, **Jamie Sharper**, **Jay Foreman**. If both Walker and Payne stay healthy, they're going to have a chance to be a pretty good line. The corners (**Aaron Glenn** and **Marcus Coleman**) had down years last year (with the Jets), but they were players at one point in time. ... I think **James Allen** would be a real good backup. I don't think he's a full-time player. He does have some running skills, and he did it for Chicago, but he's not the bell cow, the guy you want to go to all the time. ... Compared to recent expansion teams, I would think they're a little closer to Carolina, just because of the experience on the team. The question is: Can they score enough points?

Palmer, but because Capers is a hands-on coach, it will be interesting to see how the two work in tandem. Both stress the importance of establishing a strong running game, but Palmer's desire to stretch the field vertically with the passing game could prove greater than that of his boss.

But don't expect conflicts. Both men are well-grounded, and the Texans probably will be playing from behind so much that passing more than running will be a necessity.

Defensively, Capers is reunited with Vic Fangio, who was the coordinator for Carolina during Capers' four years there. Capers will let Fangio run the show, but because his background is on that side of the ball, Capers probably will get more

involved than he will with the offense.

Capers and Fangio share a common mind with regard to defensive philosophy. Both believe in an attacking style of the 3-4 defense in which a blitz can come from any direction at any time.

Style—Organization and preparation are two things Capers doesn't take for granted, not to mention qualities he looked for when he put together his staff. As a group, Capers' assistants mirror the work ethic and professional personalities of the head coach.

Off the field, Capers is calm and reserved, but he comes alive on the field and isn't hesitant about getting in a player's face to point out a mistake.

Capers is anything but impulsive or high-strung. He is a stickler for details and a tireless teacher, characteristics that will serve him well with a team that will be one of the youngest in the league. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE **Quarterbacks**—The Texans' plan always was to build their team around a quarterback. Eventually, the trail led to David Carr, who led the nation in passing yards and touchdowns last season.

Carr is everything the Texans desire in a quarterback. He has a strong and accurate arm, and he's relatively mobile and reads defenses well. No one can forecast how those skills will translate to the NFL, where the level of competition is much higher than what Carr faced as a two-year starter at Fresno State.

The plan is to have Carr ready to play as soon as possible. The Texans signed 10-year veteran Kent Graham to handle the job until Carr is ready. Graham will do his best to keep the job, but at some point this season, it will belong to Carr.

Carr is going to struggle, as most rookies do, especially quarterbacks. Because winning isn't an expectation in the Texans' first season, they might as well let Carr play and get as much experience as possible.

When Capers was Carolina's coach, he

played rookie quarterback Kerry Collins after four weeks; Palmer turned the offense over to Tim Couch after three weeks as a rookie for Cleveland. Carr should be on the field as soon, if not sooner.

As for Carr's much-talked-about low release point, Palmer will make some adjustments, but don't expect a major overhaul in Carr's throwing motion. If the Texans were that concerned about it, they wouldn't have drafted him in the first place.

Mike Quinn and Ben Sankey will battle for the No. 3 quarterback job. **GRADE: B-**

Running backs—The Texans think veteran James Allen is a good running back who can help them get going. Allen signed with the Texans because he believed they offered an opportunity to use his talents.

Ultimately, both sides might get what they expected. But the performance of rookie Jonathan Wells surely will factor into the equation.

Allen, who had 1,120 rushing yards and 39 receptions for 291 yards two years ago with the Bears, is the starter for the moment. He must fight off a challenge from Wells, a fourth-round pick who had 1,331 rushing yards and 16 touchdowns last season at Ohio State.

Allen and Wells aren't game-breaking threats. Allen is more shifty and elusive; Wells is a physical, north-and-south type of runner. In Palmer's offense, they will be asked to block and catch the ball. Jarrod Baxter, a fifth-round pick, is the best fullback on the roster and should be on the field when the Texans use a two-back set. **GRADE: B**

Receivers—Offensive playmakers are extremely difficult to find in the NFL, par-

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. David Carr will pick up the offense quickly, put aside any talk of his low release point and take over the starting quarterback job by the team's fifth game, which follows the Texans' open date.
2. Rookie Chester Pitts, a second-round pick with tons of potential, will make a successful transition from tackle in college to guard in the NFL and gain a starting job for the season opener.
3. Rookie Jonathan Wells will push veteran starter James Allen hard enough to warrant a time share at running back early in the season. Wells eventually will get the job full time.
4. CB Marcus Coleman will rebound from a so-so year with the Jets and flourish in a scheme better suited for his skills.
5. The coaching staff will begin using elements of a 4-3 defense when it realizes the defensive line talent is superior to that of the linebackers.

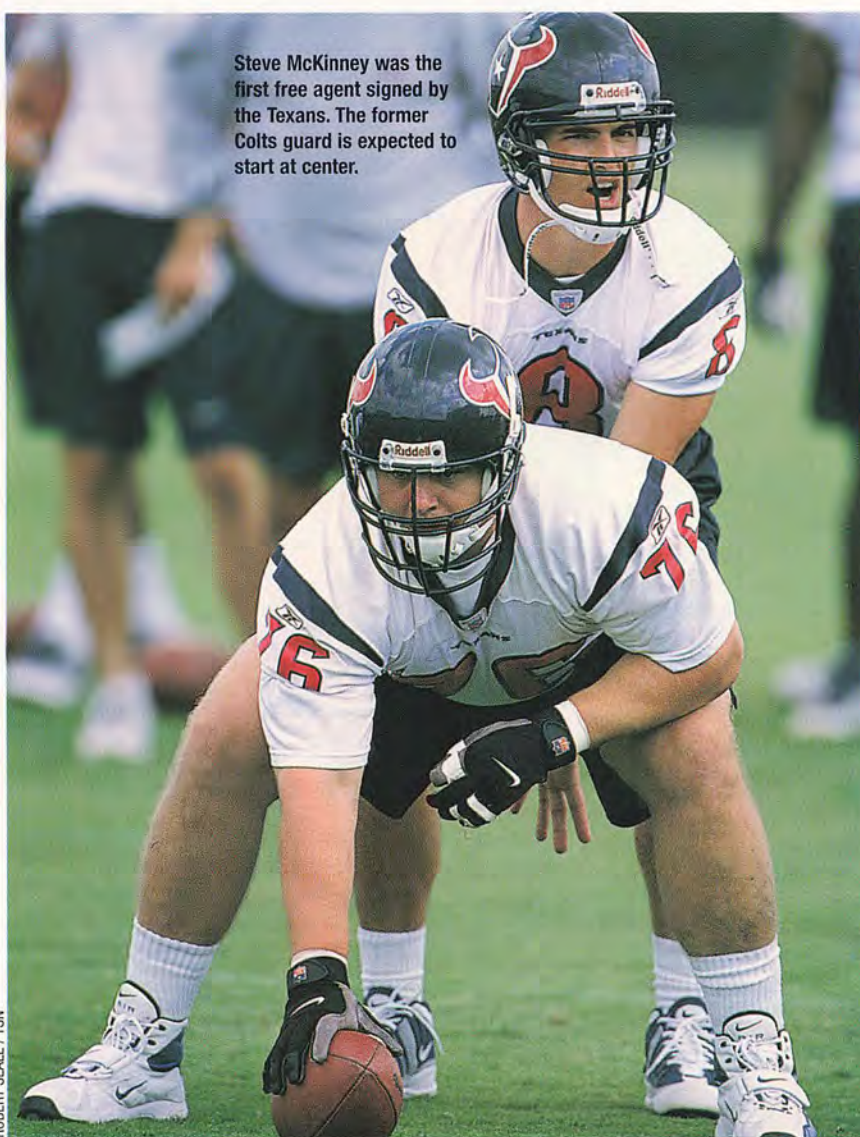


Coleman

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Steve McKinney was the first free agent signed by the Texans. The former Colts guard is expected to start at center.

ROBERT SEALE / TSN



ticularly for an expansion team.

The Texans believe they provided Carr with three such playmaking receivers—veterans Corey Bradford and Jermaine Lewis and rookie Jabar Gaffney. Palmer likes to move the ball vertically in the passing game, so his offense requires speedy receivers such as Bradford, Lewis and Gaffney.

Bradford and Gaffney are a handful for cornerbacks who try to match up one-on-one against them. Few nickel corners can cover Lewis man-to-man when he lines up in the slot.

The speed the Texans have in the receiving unit should help the running game. The legitimate threat of big plays downfield in the passing game will keep defenses from putting eight men in the box.

The Texans have plenty of speed, but they don't have a proven No. 1 receiver. Bradford, Lewis and Gaffney offer little in the way of experience. Bradford was the third receiver in Green Bay, and Lewis was used mostly as a return specialist in Baltimore.

Lewis is extremely valuable as a return

specialist, and the Texans don't want to wear him out with too much responsibility.

The club hopes Bradford, who has averaged almost 17 yards a catch in four NFL seasons, is ready to take his game to the next level. Gaffney was a big play waiting to happen his two college seasons at Florida. However, he must prove he is not another receiver who had success with the Gators but not in the NFL.

Rod Rutledge, who started several games last season for the Super Bowl champion Patriots, is the top tight end at this point. Rutledge's forte is run blocking, not catching passes. Johnny Huggins was grabbed in the expansion draft from Dallas, but he has eight receptions in two NFL seasons.

GRADE: C

Line—One area in which the Texans will resemble an established team is the offensive line. It's anchored by Boselli, who, when he was healthy, was the best left tackle in football. Boselli was selected in the expansion draft along with Young, the other bookend for the offensive line.

The first free agent the club signed was versatile offensive lineman Steve McKinney. He was the Colts' starting left guard for the last four years, but he is expected to play center. Matt Campbell and Jeremy McKinney are projected as the starting guards, although their status is hardly etched in stone. Nevertheless, both have starting NFL experience.

The average weight of the projected starters on the line is more than 300 pounds. That is important because Capers wants to establish a physical attitude, and that starts up front.

The line is also versatile, another key factor because injuries are inevitable. Steve McKinney can play center and guard, and so can rookie Fred Weary, a third-round pick. Fellow rookie Chester Pitts, a second-round pick, could challenge for the starting job at left guard but has played tackle in college.

The club wants to have a power running offense, and if it can develop one, it will create opportunities in the passing game. How that works depends on how quickly the offensive line comes together.

Boselli is the key. He had surgery on both shoulders and was limited in offseason workouts. If he is close to his previous Pro Bowl form, then this unit definitely is headed in the right direction. **GRADE: A-**

DEFENSE Line—With the club using the 3-4 defense as its base scheme, the emphasis was on finding big defensive linemen who can stuff the run and keep offensive linemen off the linebackers. The Texans got two big bodies in the expansion draft, defensive tackles Walker and Seth Payne, and

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-1	David Carr	QB	Fresno State	The Texans' QB of the future will play sooner, not later.
2-33	Jabar Gaffney	WR	Florida	Doesn't have blazing speed but is known as a playmaker.
2-50	Chester Pitts	OT	San Diego State	College tackle will be moved to guard; how smooth will it go?
3-66	Fred Weary	C	Tennessee	Versatile lineman probably will begin career as backup center.
3-83	Charles Hill	DT	Maryland	Raw prospect with a lot of upside. Biggest asset is his strength.
4-99	Jonathan Wells	RB	Ohio State	Will compete for No. 1 job but likely will be groomed for future.
5-136	Jarrod Baxter	FB	New Mexico	A good short-yardage runner, but his blocking needs work.
5-153	Ramon Walker	S	Pittsburgh	Team needs to decide if he's a safety or special teams player only.
6-173	DeMarcus Faggins	CB	Kansas State	A physical hitter, but Texans are loaded at cornerback.
6-190	Howard Green	DT	Louisiana State	Big, physical player whose devotion to game has been questioned.
7-229	Greg White	DE	Minnesota	Texans like his ability to rush the passer. Will be tried at OLB.
7-261	Ahmad Miller	DE	UNLV	"Mr. Irrelevant" has a legitimate chance to make final roster.

then selected two more defensive tackles—Charles Hill and Ahmad Miller—in the college draft.

Payne is expected to play nose tackle and Walker right end, but both are versatile enough to play any position on the line. Hill's future seems to be at nose tackle, which means Payne eventually will shift to left end. Expansion pick Jabari Issa also factors into the equation as an end.

Because 3-4 linemen take such a pounding, expect the team to do a good deal of rotating. Nevertheless, the primary unit will consist of the three best linemen, and Capers and Fangio will figure out who plays where after that is determined.

Walker has the most pass-rushing ability of any lineman on the roster. Payne had his best season last year for Jacksonville, but 3-4 defensive linemen typically don't get a lot of sacks. The quality of the depth will depend on how quickly Hill develops and how much the Texans are able to get out of Issa and Miller. **GRADE: C**

Linebackers—When it comes to their linebackers, the Texans have more questions than Regis Philbin. The weak side is the bigger area of concern, with Greg Jones on the outside and Jay Foreman on the inside. They are there mostly because of the lack of solid options.

Although he started 15 games with the Redskins in 1999, Jones has been used primarily as a special teams player throughout his career. In college, Jones showed some pass-rushing ability as a defensive end, and that intrigues the club. It hopes he can take his game to another level.

The Texans are more optimistic about Wong, the right outside linebacker, who will be playing on the outside for the first time in his NFL career. Wong was a solid middle linebacker for the Vikings, but the Texans look to his days as a pass-rushing defensive end at Stanford as evidence he can be an outside force in the 3-4 defense.

Both moves are gambles to a certain extent, but Capers has found success with similar transition projects, such as Kevin Greene and Jason Gildon. How Wong and Jones play goes a long way toward determining how good the Texans' defense is in 2002.

The situation at inside linebacker appears better with Foreman joining Sharper. Both are tackling machines. All of the linebackers will be asked to rush the passer and drop into coverage, so athletic ability is extremely important. **GRADE: D**

Secondary—The Texans expect to blitz often, which means their cornerbacks will be asked to provide plenty of man-to-man coverage. Glenn is one of the best cover corners in the league. Another former Jet, Marcus Coleman, didn't play as well last year as he did two seasons ago, but he is a big, physical corner with solid cover skills.

Because teams in the new AFC South tend to use so many three-receiver sets, finding quality extra cornerbacks was a must.

The Texans believe they did so in signing free agent Jason Simmons away from the Steelers and trading with the Rams for Jacoby Shepherd, who landed in the doghouse with St. Louis when his commitment and focus came into question.

The Texans also think Shepherd can play safety, but they want to give him a chance at the corner job before attempting a position change. There is no shortage of experienced veteran safeties on the roster, but there are no proven playmakers, either. Matt Stevens, Kevin Williams, Chris Carter and Hakim Akbar will battle for the two starting positions, along with rookie Ramon Walker, who could play himself into the lineup. In addition to pass-coverage responsibilities, the Texans want their safeties to provide run support and blitz on occasion. **GRADE: B**

SPECIAL TEAMS From the beginning, the club targeted special teams as an area where it could be solid immediately. Some consider Lewis the best return specialist in the NFL, which is a big plus because the Texans' offense will need all the help it can get in terms of field position.

Lewis is more of a threat on punts than kickoffs. Regardless, he always seems to be one defender away from breaking a big one.

The Texans also acquired Kris Brown despite the fact he missed a league-high 14

Stadium/Media

Reliant Stadium (65,900, grass).

Ticket information: 832-667-2000.

Training site: Reliant Park practice facility, Houston; 832-667-2000.

Radio: KILT-AM (610).

Website: www.houstontexans.com

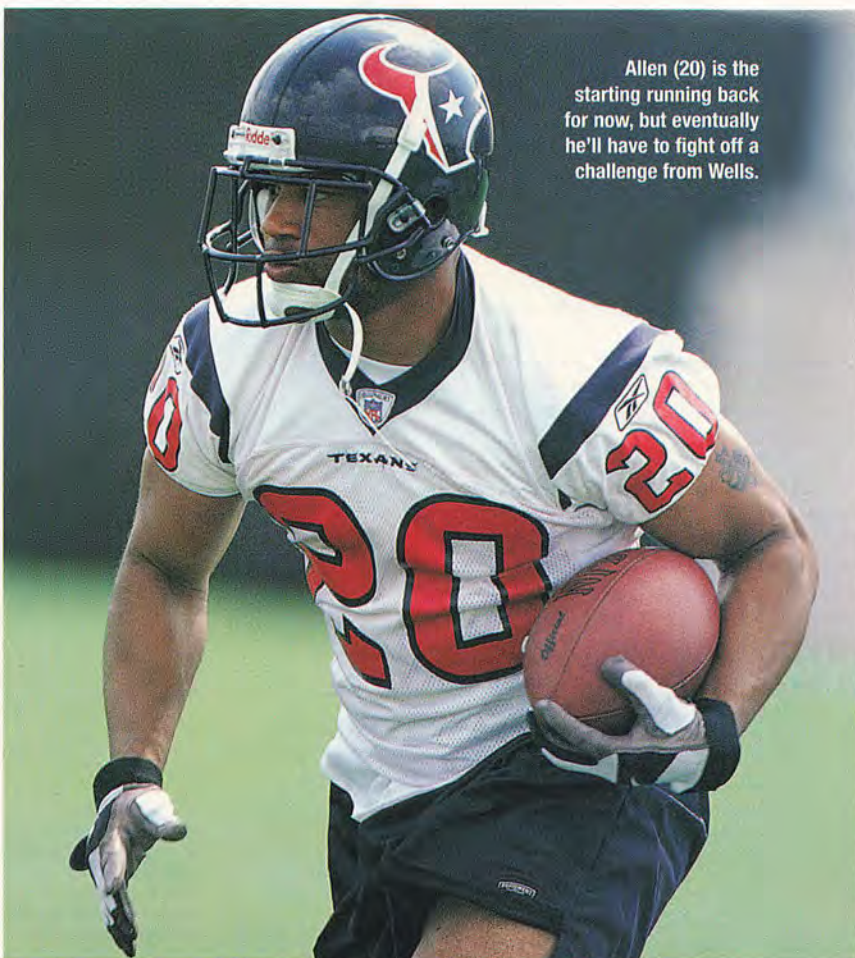
Records

Dom Capers' regular-season record: First year with Texans; 30-34 overall in four seasons with Panthers.

Capers' postseason record: 1-1 in one appearance with Panthers.

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dom Capers	Head coach	16	1
Chris Palmer	Offensive coordinator	12	1
Vic Fangio	Defensive coordinator	17	1
Joe Marciano	Special teams coordinator	17	1
Kippy Brown	Wide receivers	10	1
Jedd Fisch	Defensive quality control	1	1
Todd Grantham	Defensive line	4	1
Chick Harris	Running backs	22	1
Reggie Herring	Linebackers	1	1
Jon Hoke	Defensive backs	1	1
Tony Marciano	Offensive line	5	1
Steve Marshall	Assistant offensive line	1	1
Dan Riley	Strength & conditioning	20	1
Greg Roman	Tight ends	8	1
Brian Stewart	Assistant defensive backs	1	1
Eric Sautulovich	Assistant special teams	1	1
Ray Wright	Asst. strength & cond.	1	1



Allen (20) is the starting running back for now, but eventually he'll have to fight off a challenge from Wells.

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

REALIGNMENT reality

Confused by the new setup in the NFL? Blame the Texans. Realignment became a reality only after they joined the league, making the NFL a collection of 32 units. The biggest fear of the newest NFL franchise was that it would be sorted into a division with Jacksonville, Indianapolis and Tennessee. Well, it happened. But the Texans are not as distressed as they might have been. Before last season, those teams were among the strongest in the AFC and looked like six sure losses for an expansion team struggling to find its way. But after the Jaguars, Colts and Titans turned in disappointing seasons in 2001, the AFC South doesn't seem so daunting. The Texans' new rivals were a combined 19-29 last year, and none of them took significant strides toward improving. The Texans are still the worst team in the division, but they shouldn't take an 0-for-the-AFC South, as originally feared.



Payne can play any position in the D-line.

field-goal attempts last season. Most of those misses were in the swirling wind at Pittsburgh's Heinz Field, where many kickers struggled. Before the Steelers moved into their new home, Brown had made 84.7 percent of his career field-goal attempts. Brown is solid on kickoffs, which meant the club didn't have to find a punter who could kick off or use a roster spot on another kicker.

The punting situation isn't quite as settled. Chad Stanley has the early edge, but Aron Langley and John Baker are expected to challenge for the job. General manager Charley Casserly continues to look for possible upgrades.

The Texans put such a high emphasis on special teams that they even took a long snapper, Sean McDermott, in the expansion draft. McDermott did a solid job for the Bucs, whose former special teams coach, Joe Marciano, holds the same position for the Texans. **GRADE: B**

BOTTOM LINE Despite acquiring a nice collection of talent through the two drafts and free agency, the Texans enter the season with many questions about their starting lineup and a lack of quality depth everywhere except in the offensive line. If the young players develop quickly and there aren't any significant injuries, this team could be respectable. But it's more likely the Texans are in for a long first season. **TSN**

Carlton Thompson covers the Texans for the Houston Chronicle.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR ■ Corey Bradford
■ Jermaine Lewis

LT ● Tony Boselli
■ Jimmy Herndon

LG ■ Matt Campbell
■ Chester Pitts

C ● Steve McKinney
■ Fred Weary

RG ■ Jeremy McKinney
■ DeMingo Graham

RT ● Ryan Young
□ Robert Hicks

TE ■ Rod Rutledge
□ Johnny Huggins

WR ■ Jabar Gaffney
□ Avion Black

QB ■ Kent Graham
■ David Carr

RB ■ James Allen
■ Jonathan Wells

FB ■ Jarrod Baxter
□ Matt Snider

Defense

LE □ Jabari Issa
■ Charles Hill

DT ■ Seth Payne
■ Howard Green

RE ● Gary Walker
□ Dorian Boose

OLB □ Greg Jones
□ Jeff Posey

ILB ■ Jay Foreman
■ Allen Aldridge

ILB ● Jamie Sharper
□ Troy Evans

OLB ■ Kailee Wong
□ Khari Samuel

CB ● Aaron Glenn
■ Jason Simmons

CB ■ Marcus Coleman
□ Jacoby Shepherd

SS □ Kevin Williams
□ Hakim Akbar

FS ■ Matt Stevens
■ Chris Carter

Specialists

K ■ Kris Brown
P □ Chad Stanley

KR ● Jermaine Lewis
PR ● Jermaine Lewis

LS ■ Sean McDermott

● Can play for any team
■ Solid player
□ Fringe player

TEXANS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
8	Carr, David	6-3/223	7-21-79	R	Fresno State	D1/02	—
10	Graham, Kent	6-6/248	11-1-68	11	Ohio State	UFA/02	3/0
Running backs							
20	Allen, James	5-10/215	3-28-75	5	Oklahoma	UFA/02	16/7
47	Baxter, Jarrod (FB)	6-1/245	3-9-79	R	New Mexico	D5a/02	—
33	Groce, Cliff (FB)	5-11/240	7-30-72	5	Texas A&M	FA/02	—
22	Moreau, Frank	6-2/230	9-9-76	3	Louisville	FA/02	5/1
34	Prentice, Travis	5-11/221	12-8-76	3	Miami of Ohio	W-Min/02	14/0
44	Snider, Matt (FB)	6-3/242	1-26-76	4	Richmond	FA/01	4/0
32	Wells, Jonathan	6-1/243	7-21-79	R	Ohio State	D4/02	—
Receivers							
88	Black, Avion	5-11/185	4-24-77	3	Tennessee State	ED/02	14/0
85	Bradford, Corey	6-1/197	12-8-75	5	Jackson State	UFA/02	16/6
12	Gaffney, Jabar	6-1/193	12-1-80	R	Florida	D2a/02	—
49	Huggins, Johnny (TE)	6-3/245	3-29-76	2	Alabama State	ED/02	10/2
87	Insley, Trevor	6-0/190	12-25-77	3	Nevada	W-Ind/02	11/0
84	Lewis, Jermaine	5-7/180	10-16-74	7	Maryland	ED/02	15/2
82	Miller, Billy (TE)	6-3/230	4-24-77	4	Southern California	FA/02	—
89	Moreland, Jake (TE)	6-3/255	1-18-77	3	Western Michigan	FA/02	4/0
83	Rutledge, Rod (TE)	6-5/265	8-12-75	5	Alabama	UFA/02	15/14
81	Simmons, Tony	6-1/212	12-8-74	5	Wisconsin	UFA/02	7/0
Offensive linemen							
71	Boselli, Tony (T)	6-7/322	4-17-72	8	Southern California	ED/02	3/3
66	Campbell, Matt (G)	6-4/300	7-14-72	8	South Carolina	ED/02	11/5
70	Graham, DeMingo (G)	6-3/310	9-10-73	5	Hofstra	UFA/02	16/16
75	Herndon, Jimmy (T)	6-8/318	8-30-73	7	Houston	UFA/02	16/0
77	Hicks, Robert (T)	6-6/338	11-17-74	4	Mississippi State	FA/02	0/0
	Lane, Max	6-6/320	2-22-71	8	Navy	FA/02	0/0
48	McDermott, Sean (C)	6-4/250	12-5-76	2	Kansas	ED/02	16/0
68	McKinney, Jeremy (G)	6-6/301	1-6-76	3	Iowa	ED/02	15/9
76	McKinney, Steve (C)	6-4/295	10-15-75	5	Texas A&M	UFA/02	14/14
69	Pitts, Chester (G)	6-4/320	6-26-79	R	San Diego State	D2b/02	—
65	Schau, Ryan (T)	6-6/300	12-30-75	4	Illinois	ED/02	2/1
61	Weary, Fred (C)	6-4/308	9-30-77	R	Tennessee	D3a/02	—
74	Young, Ryan (T)	6-5/320	6-28-76	4	Kansas State	ED/02	16/16
Defensive linemen							
90	Boose, Dorian (E)	6-5/292	1-29-74	5	Washington State	FA/02	8/2
95	DeLoach, Jerry (T)	6-2/315	7-17-77	2	California	T-Was/02	15/4
67	Green, Howard (T)	6-2/331	1-12-79	R	Louisiana State	D6b/02	—
63	Hill, Charles (E)	6-2/293	11-1-80	R	Maryland	D3b/02	—
72	Issa, Jabari (E)	6-5/296	4-18-78	3	Washington	ED/02	13/5
	Miller, Ahmad (T)	6-3/306	4-10-78	R	UNLV	D7c/02	—
91	Payne, Seth (T)	6-4/303	2-12-75	6	Cornell	ED/02	16/16
98	Posey, Jeff (E)	6-4/249	8-14-75	5	Southern Mississippi	UFA/02	11/5
96	Walker, Gary (E)	6-2/305	2-28-73	8	Auburn	ED/02	16/16
62	White, Greg (E)	6-3/268	7-25-79	R	Minnesota	D7b/02	—
Linebackers							
	Aldridge, Allen	6-1/254	5-30-72	9	Houston	UFA/02	16/16
51	Allen, Brian	6-0/232	4-1-78	2	Florida State	ED/02	3/0
97	Elam, Shane	6-1/240	11-6-77	2	Mississippi	FA/01	4/0
54	Evans, Troy	6-3/243	12-3-77	1	Cincinnati	FA/02	0/0
56	Foreman, Jay	6-1/240	2-18-76	4	Nebraska	D5/99	16/16
53	Granville, Billy	6-3/246	3-11-74	5	Duke	FA/02	0/0
59	Jones, Greg	6-4/248	5-22-74	6	Colorado	UFA/02	16/0
98	Posey, Jeff	6-4/249	8-14-75	5	Southern Miss.	UFA/02	11/5
99	Samuel, Khari	6-3/240	10-14-76	4	Massachusetts	FA/02	10/0
55	Sharper, Jamie	6-3/240	11-23-74	6	Virginia	ED/02	16/16
52	Wong, Kailee	6-2/250	5-23-76	5	Stanford	UFA/02	16/16
Defensive backs							
28	Akbar, Hakim (S)	6-0/212	8-11-80	2	Washington	W-NE/02	6/0
36	Carter, Chris (S)	6-2/212	9-27-74	6	Texas	UFA/02	16/4
42	Coleman, Marcus (CB)	6-2/210	5-24-74	7	Texas Tech	ED/02	16/16
38	Faggins, Demarcus (CB)	5-10/178	6-13-79	R	Kansas State	D6a/02	—
31	Glenn, Aaron (CB)	5-9/185	7-16-72	9	Texas A&M	ED/02	13/12
29	Shepherd, Jacoby (CB)	6-1/195	8-31-79	3	Oklahoma State	T-SIL/02	7/0
30	Simmons, Jason (CB)	5-9/198	3-30-76	5	Arizona State	UFA/02	12/0
26	Stevens, Matt (S)	6-0/205	6-15-73	7	Appalachian State	ED/02	15/4
24	Suttle, Jason (CB)	5-10/181	12-2-74	3	Wisconsin	W-Den/01	1/0
41	Walker, Ramon (CB)	6-0/197	11-8-79	R	Pittsburgh	D5b/02	—
23	Williams, Kevin (S)	6-0/192	8-4-75	4	Oklahoma State	FA/02	0/0
Specialists							
4	Baker, John (P)	6-3/223	4-22-77	3	North Texas State	W-SIL/02	16/0
3	Brown, Kris (K)	5-11/206	12-23-76	4	Nebraska	FA/02	16/0
7	Stanley, Chad (P)	6-3/205	1-29-76	4	Stephen F. Austin	FA/02	4/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: WR Sherrod Gideon, P Aron Langley, CB Anthony Malmrough, G Chad Overhauser, S Mitch Palmer, QB Mike Quinn, DE Corey Sears, LB Casey Tisdale. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—obtained on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition; ED—expansion draft pick.



Colts



Manning's problems in 2001 resulted from overcompensating for an unreliable defense.

MARK BOLTON FOR TSN

BY MIKE CHAPPELL

Jim Irsay faced two decisions in January that would shape the future of the Colts' organization. The team's owner wrestled with the first and seized upon the second.

After concluding he had no option other than to fire coach Jim Mora following a 6-10 season that was rife with injury and painful-to-watch defensive play, Irsay decided the only option for a successor was Tony Dungy.

He contacted Dungy shortly after he was fired by the Buccaneers.

"I just wanted him to know that there was no other coach on the planet I wanted to

coach my football team," Irsay says. "Not (Steve) Spurrier. Not (Bill) Parcells.

"Tony gives us a chance to be better sooner. I am convinced he gives us the best chance to win the Super Bowl."

Irsay backed up his conviction by making Dungy the highest-paid coach in franchise history, giving him a five-year, \$13 million contract.

Rest assured, Irsay expects a quick return on his investment. Whether the Colts can return to the playoff form they flashed in the 1999 and 2000 seasons after last year's disappointment hinges upon the ability of club president Bill Polian to supply Dungy

with the necessary defensive talent—and Dungy to maximize it.

No one questions the potency of the Colts' offense, directed by quarterback Peyton Manning. But how will the Dungy-influenced defense stack up? That's the question of the year for the Colts.

COACHING Strategies—The Colts will rely on contrasting styles in their attempt to regain contender status.

On defense, Dungy and coordinator Ron Meeks will use a few basic concepts—but all must be executed at a high level. Dungy has installed his cover 2 scheme, which isn't nearly as complicated as the system used by former coordinator Vic Fangio. The coaches' idea is to ingrain in the players' minds their responsibilities on each play and the importance of each player being accountable for his role.

Offensive coordinator Tom Moore's approach, meanwhile, is all about variety and throwing a lot of formations and personnel groupings at opponents.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8 at Jacksonville	1:00	Nov. 10 at Philadelphia	1:00
Sept. 15 MIAMI	1:00	Nov. 17 DALLAS	1:00
Sept. 22 at Houston	1:00	Nov. 24 at Denver	8:30
Sept. 29 Open date		Dec. 1 HOUSTON	4:05
Oct. 6 CINCINNATI	1:00	Dec. 8 at Tennessee	1:00
Oct. 13 BALTIMORE	1:00	Dec. 15 at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 21 at Pit. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 22 N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
Oct. 27 at Washington	8:30	Dec. 29 JACKSONVILLE	4:05
Nov. 3 TENNESSEE	1:00	Strength of schedule: T 16th	

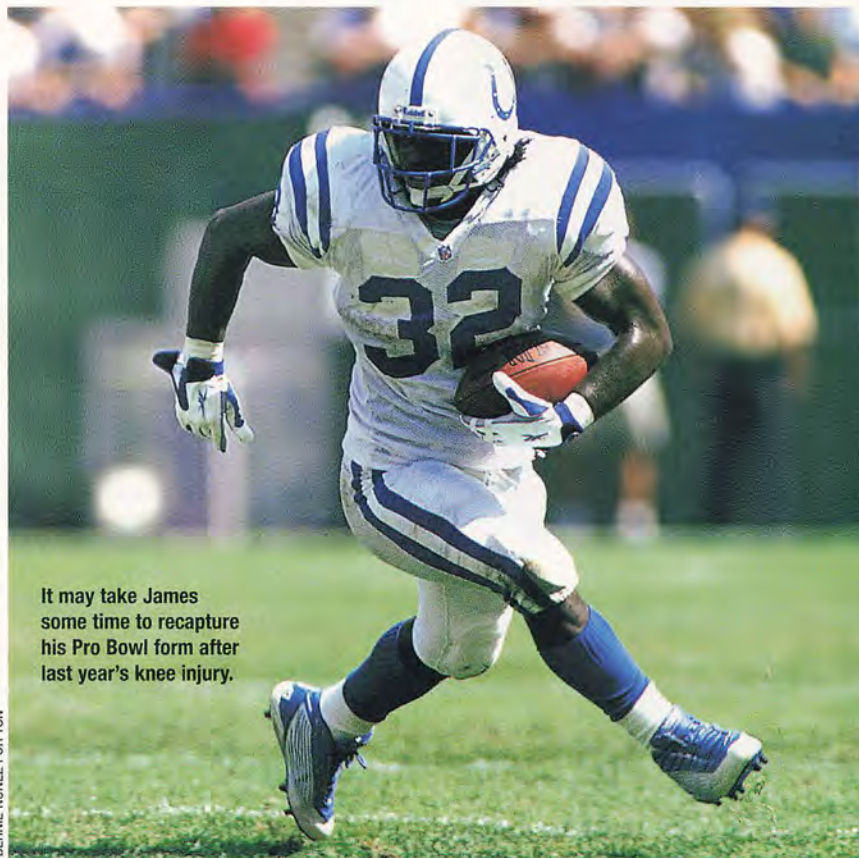
One reason Moore has been able to keep opposing defenses guessing is the talent at his disposal. Marcus Pollard is a versatile tight end, and Edgerrin James is one of the more well-rounded running backs in the league. Moore will split James wide or even put him in the slot, causing matchup problems to take advantage of.

Style—Mora was not the volatile personality some made him out to be. But there is no question his successor, Dungy, has a more low-key, consistent temperament. He was an unflappable leader in Tampa Bay. That approach won't change, and that's a plus considering Dungy's first squad in Indianapolis will be teeming with young, impressionable players.

But more important than Dungy's disposition will be his ability, and that of his staff, to work with and nurture what will be one of the youngest rosters in the NFL.

Meeks has a background as a secondary coach, and that expertise will be put to the test by a unit that has promise but lacks experience. Offensive line coach Howard Mudd has few peers when it comes to developing linemen, whether they be high draft picks or undrafted free agents. His group in 2002 will be a mixture of each.

On game day, it will be up to Dungy to say the right things and push the right but-



It may take James some time to recapture his Pro Bowl form after last year's knee injury.

BERNIE NUNEZ FOR TSN

tons. If the proper responses are achieved, it likely will be because his staff laid the proper groundwork in terms of instruction and preparation. **GRADE: B+**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Imagine coming off a season in which you pass for 4,131 yards and 26 touchdowns but have people wondering why you struggled. That's how it is for Manning, who has set an incredibly high standard for himself in a short period of time.

In his fourth season under center, Manning continued to compile gaudy statistics. But the one that stuck out—and the one that must be addressed—was his interception total of 23. Only the Chiefs' Trent Green, with 24, had more.

Much of Manning's 2001 struggles can be traced to attempts to overcompensate for an unreliable defense. That should change in 2002 with the arrival of Dungy and several new faces on that side of the ball.

If Manning is able to concentrate on his job, the interceptions will decline and he will return to his Pro Bowl form of 1999-2000. He remains one of the most dedicated, studious quarterbacks in the league, and he's only 26.

A pre-draft trade with the Seahawks brought Brock Huard to town. He becomes Manning's third backup in as many seasons, following Mark Rypien and Kelly Holcomb. Huard has a lively arm and good mobility, but he probably won't have much occasion

to use either. Since Manning's arrival in 1998, Colts quarterbacks not named Manning have thrown a combined 24 passes. Manning has thrown 2,226. **GRADE: A-**

Running backs—All eyes will be on James' left knee as training camp unfolds and the regular season nears. James' bid for a third straight league rushing title ended when he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in that knee in late October. His rehabilitation has progressed without a hitch, and James anticipates opening the season as the starter.

Even so, it would be expecting too much for James to be back in Pro Bowl form just

10 months after undergoing reconstructive surgery. His game calls for sharp cuts and lateral movements. Recapturing that aspect of his game—and regaining confidence in the knee—will take some time.

The only positive byproduct of James' season-ending injury was the emergence of Dominic Rhodes. In 15 games, including 10 starts, Rhodes rushed for 1,104 yards, an NFL record for an undrafted rookie.

The offense, which ranked second in the league in 2001, is at its best when James' rushing and receiving skills are featured. But the presence of Rhodes can't be overstated. If James encounters further problems with his knee, Rhodes will assume the role of workhorse.

If James returns without incident, as expected, the Colts occasionally can torment opposing defenses by using James and Rhodes in the same backfield. The idea of leaving Rhodes in the backfield and splitting James out wide or putting him in the slot to create mismatches is an intriguing one.

Fullbacks Jim Finn and Wes Ours essentially will remain situational lead blockers.

GRADE: A

Receivers—This position is proof that the more things change, the more they stay the same. What has changed? Gone from the mix are wide receivers Jerome Pathon and Terrence Wilkins and tight end Ken Dilger. That trio combined for 90 receptions a year ago.

What's the same? This remains Marvin Harrison's neighborhood. He has averaged 109 receptions, 1,533 yards and 14 touchdowns the past three seasons. There is no reason to believe Harrison won't become the first player in NFL history to catch at least 100 passes in four consecutive seasons. He's deceptively strong and elusive at the line of scrimmage, making him difficult to jam, and has the acceleration to blow past coverage. But once again, the passing game won't approach its potential unless Harrison gets some consistent help.

The team hopes that will come from Qadry Ismail, who was picked up as a free agent. The Ravens' leading receiver last sea-

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-11	Dwight Freeney	DE	Syracuse	Colts view him as the edge pass rusher they've been missing.
2-42	Larry Tripplett	DT	Washington	Provides interior bulk, muscle and run-stopping ability.
3-74	Joseph Jefferson	CB	Western Kentucky	Raw prospect who could flourish in Dungy's zone-based system.
4-106	David Thornton	LB	North Carolina	Expected to back up on weak side; Dungy likes his intensity and drive.
6-182	David Pugh	DT	Virginia Tech	Undersized prospect who plays with relentless attitude.
6-183	James Lewis	DB	Miami (Fla.)	Aggressive strong safety should fit nicely in young secondary.
6-204	Brian Allen	RB	Stanford	If he contributes as a rookie, it will be as a kick returner.
7-220	Josh Mallard	DE	Georgia	His potential as an outside pass rusher intrigued team scouts.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-19	Tarik Glenn	OT	California	Starter with Colts
'98-1	Peyton Manning	QB	Tennessee	Starter with Colts
'99-4	Edgerrin James	RB	Miami (Fla.)	Starter with Colts
'00-28	Rob Morris	LB	Brigham Young	Starter with Colts
'01-30	Reggie Wayne	WR	Miami (Fla.)	Starter with Colts

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

I think they will be a little more solid defensively. Last year, they couldn't rush the passer and they couldn't cover people. That's a bad combination. The cover 2 defense that **Tony Dungy** is putting in will take a little pressure off the corners. If **Joseph Jefferson** steps up and starts, he'd be a great press corner in cover 2 with **Walt Harris**. They're both big guys who get up and get their hands on guys and redirect them. Both their safeties, **Idrees Bashir** and **Cory Bird**, have range. ... I've always thought it takes a full year for those skills guys to come back from major knee injuries. You sure hope **Edgerrin James** does. But he's going to be playing on artificial turf, and it's going to be less than a year from the surgery until the start of the season.



BERNIE NUNEZ FOR TSN

THE COLTS

... If **Dwight Freeney** goes out and gets 12 sacks as a rookie, then he's a pretty good pick. If he goes out and gets three sacks and is not on the field 50 percent of the time, then he's not a very good pick. They're going to have to use him on the edge. You obviously can't put him head-up on the tackle down after down and expect him to produce. ... **Qadry Ismail** is bigger than the wide receivers they lost (**Jerome Pathon** and **Terrence Wilkins**). He is strong and can get down the field and make a big play. The problem with Ismail is you expect him to be a tough guy, and he's really not. You look at him and think, wow, this guy is going to catch the ball over the middle and break tackles, but he doesn't look like he wants any part of that.

son, Ismail has deep speed and is a home run threat defenses must respect. Reggie Wayne, the 2001 first-round pick, should be an ideal third option, though his progress as a rookie was slowed by injuries. A productive year not only is expected but needed because the team will make greater use of three-wideout formations.

Of the offseason departures, Dilger's will be the toughest to overcome. He struggled in the passing game last season but still did the dirty work as a blocker. Pollard is coming off the best season of his career (47 receptions, 739 yards, eight touchdowns), and those numbers could climb without Dilger around. But a backup tight end must be found. The candidates are Joe Dean Davenport, a sel-

dom-used player in 2001, and Jermaine Wiggins, a waiver pickup. Wiggins was a part-time starter for the Patriots in 2001 and improved as the season unfolded. He was at his best during the postseason. **GRADE: B**

Line—One of the NFL's least-heralded groups also has been one of its best. Since Manning's arrival in 1998, the line has yielded a league-low 86 sacks—15 fewer than the second-place Jets—and paved the way for four 1,000-yard rushers.

If that efficiency is to continue, Ryan Diem and Rick DeMulling must come through. Diem, entering his second season, will start the season where he ended 2001, at right guard. He's a 6-6, 332-pound mauler. DeMulling's task is more daunting: replace four-year starter Steve McKinney at left guard.

DeMulling, a 2001 seventh-round pick, seldom got on the field last season. But he's the type of smart, intense player who seems to blossom under the guidance of Mudd. The team provided experienced competition for DeMulling by signing Jim Pyne, an eight-year veteran who has played with four teams and started 73 games.

The rest of the line returns intact, which is a source of great comfort for Manning. Left tackle Tarik Glenn got his big payday—a six-year, \$30 million contract—during the offseason and is a lock to eventually earn a spot in the Pro Bowl, possibly as soon as this season. Right tackle Adam Meadows and center Jeff Saturday are as reliable as they come.

Depth, however, is a problem. Waverly Jackson provides capable support at both tackle spots, but the interior line lacks a backup candidate with any experience.

GRADE: B

DEFENSE Line—Dungy enjoyed success with his cover 2 defense during stops in Pittsburgh, Minnesota and Tampa Bay. If that trend is to continue, the defensive line has to step up.

"This is where the whole thing starts," Dungy says of the front four. "They've got to get upfield and create penetration." In this scheme, size is not the overriding characteristic. It takes a backseat to speed and athleticism.

Dungy inherited a pass-rushing end in Chad Bratzke, agile but undersized tackles in Ellis Johnson and Josh Williams and a couple of developing players in Brad Scioli and Chukie Nwokorie. Bratzke has been the team's premier quarterback chaser the past three seasons (28 sacks in 47 games), and Johnson has been workmanlike (28½ sacks, 339 tackles since 1997). But neither has received much help.

The team believes it found some in the offseason. The draft delivered ends Dwight Freeney and Josh Mallard and tackles Larry Tripplett and David Pugh. The free-agent market produced former Bucs tackle James Cannida, a favorite of Dungy in Tampa.

Much will be asked of Freeney, an outstanding edge pass rusher who collected 34 career sacks at Syracuse, and Tripplett, a quick 305-pounder out of Washington. If Freeney is as good as advertised, he and Bratzke will give the Colts the two-pronged pass rush they have lacked. But both are right ends, so an adjustment would have to be made to get both on the field.

At the team's April minicamp, both players were used at right end, but don't be surprised if Bratzke is switched, at times, to the left side to make room for Freeney. If Freeney doesn't boost the pass rush, critics will remind Dungy and Polian they could

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Edgerrin James may start slowly, but he'll make a solid return from his torn ACL and remain the team's workhorse.
2. The offense will remain potent, but only if WR Reggie Wayne improves. Injuries slowed his rookie development, and further growing pains will prove a major pain to the unit.
3. Tony Dungy and coordinator Ron Meeks will have an immediate impact on the defense, making it at least reliable often enough for the team to again be a playoff contender.
4. LB Marcus Washington, who had eight sacks in '01, will surpass that in Dungy's pursue-and-pounce defense.
5. The team will have a difficult time replacing veteran TE Ken Dilger—and we're not talking about his receptions. He did a lot of the unnoticed but important work in pass protection and run blocking.



Wayne

2001 results

Sept. 9	at N.Y. Jets	W	45-24
Sept. 23	BUFFALO	W	42-26
Sept. 30	at New England	L	13-44
Oct. 7	Open date		
Oct. 14	OAKLAND	L	18-23
Oct. 21	NEW ENGLAND	L	17-38
Oct. 25	at Kansas City	W	35-28
Nov. 4	at Buffalo	W	30-14
Nov. 11	MIAMI	L	24-27
Nov. 18	at New Orleans	L	20-34
Nov. 25	SAN FRANCISCO	L	21-40
Dec. 2	at Baltimore	L	27-39
Dec. 10	at Miami	L	6-41
Dec. 16	ATLANTA	W	41-27
Dec. 23	N.Y. JETS	L	28-29
Dec. 30	at St. Louis	L	17-42
Jan. 6	DENVER	W	29-10

Moves

Key additions

DT James Cannida	Free agent/Buccaneers
LB Greg Favors	Free agent/Titans
CB Walt Harris	Free agent/Bears
QB Brock Huard	Trade/Seahawks
WR Qadry Ismail	Free agent/Ravens
G Jim Pyne	Free agent/Eagles
TE Jermaine Wiggins	Free agent/Patriots

Key losses

CB Jeff Burris	Free agent/Bengals
S Chad Cota	Free agent
TE Ken Dilger	Free agent/Buccaneers
WR Trevor Insley	Free agent/Texans
G Steve McKinney	Free agent/Texans
G Larry Moore	Free agent/Redskins
WR Jerome Pathon	Free agent/Saints
DT Christian Peter	Free agent
WR Tony Simmons	Free agent/Texans
DT Mike Wells	Free agent
WR Terrence Wilkins	Trade/Rams

Stadium/Media

RCA Dome (56,127, artificial).

Ticket information: 317-297-7000.

Training site: Rose Hulman Technical Institute, Terre Haute, Ind.; 317-297-2658.

Radio: WNDE-AM (1260), WFBO-FM (94.5).

Website: www.colts.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 6-10 (4th in AFC East); 3-5 in division; 5-7 in conference; 1-3 vs. NFC; 3-5 at home; 3-5 on road; 4-7 on artificial turf; 2-3 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Tony Dungy's regular-season record: First season with Colts; 54-42 overall in six seasons with Buccaneers.

Dungy's postseason record: 2-4 in four appearances with Buccaneers.

Team record last five years: 35-45 (.438, ranks 22nd in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*372.2	1	2
Rushing offense	*122.9	4	7
Passing offense	*249.3	1	2
Scoring offense	413	1	2
Total defense	*357.2	16	29
Rushing defense	*132.2	12	25
Passing defense	*225.0	15	27
Scoring defense	486	16	31
Takeaways	25	12	T23
Giveaways	38	T15	T27
Turnover differential	-13	15	28
Sacks	40	9	16
Sacks allowed	30	6	10

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Tony Dungy	Head coach	22	1
Tom Moore	Offensive coordinator	26	5
Ron Meeks	Defensive coordinator	12	1
Jim Caldwell	Quarterbacks	2	1
Clyde Christensen	Receivers	7	1
Chris Foerster	Tight ends	10	1
Richard Howell	Asst. strength & condit.	3	3
Gene Huey	Running backs	11	11
Howard Mudd	Offensive line	29	5
Mike Murphy	Linebackers	17	5
Russ Purnell	Special teams	17	1
Diron Reynolds	Defensive quality control	1	1
John Teerlinck	Defensive line	14	1
Ricky Thomas	Offensive quality control	6	1
Jon Torine	Strength & conditioning	8	5
Alan Williams	Defensive secondary	2	1



BERNIE NUNEZ FOR TSN

Washington had an auspicious debut as a first-time starter, getting eight sacks.

have drafted tackle Albert Haynesworth. Johnson could flourish in Dungy's aggressive defense. **GRADE: C-**

Linebackers—The position is full of youth and promise. The starting group of Mike Peterson, Marcus Washington and Rob Morris returns, and the backup situation will be better than a year ago. Greg Favors, a two-year starter for the Titans, arrived as a free agent. David Thornton, the leading tackler on a North Carolina defense that included first-round picks Julius Peppers and Ryan Sims, was drafted in the fourth round. Sam Sword played well in two starts last season and should only get better.

Peterson and Washington seem to be perfect fits in the new scheme. Both have speed, playmaking ability and attitude. Peterson ended last season with a balky knee but should be able to recapture the form that made him the best player on a bad defense. Washington was a first-time starter last season and showed he could be something special by collecting eight sacks.

The linebacker to keep an eye on is Morris. Like Washington, he was a first-time starter in 2001. He led the team with 128 tackles despite struggling at times and not being fully recovered from a knee injury that forced him to miss the final nine games of his rookie season. He will be asked to play more in open space and be accountable in coverage.

Favors is a nice addition. He started 27 games in Tennessee and can be expected to contribute either in the base defense or in nickel situations. **GRADE: C+**

Secondary—The decision to jettison cornerback Jeff Burris and strong safety Chad Cota, both starters, in the offseason left the unit with only one truly experienced player—cornerback Walt Harris, who has yet to step on the field for the Colts. He spent his first six years in the NFL with the Bears.

Nowhere is the team's youthful makeup more evident. Second-year free safety Idrees Bashir is a keeper but still needs to develop. The starting strong safety figures to be either Cory Bird, another second-year player who played in the nickel package as a rookie, or sixth-round draft pick James Lewis. Aligned opposite Harris at cornerback will be David Macklin, a 2000 third-round pick. Macklin struggled with his game and confidence a year ago, but his aggressive, physical style might be better suited to Dungy's scheme.

The supporting cast is promising but largely unproven. The safety prospects include Jason Doering and Jermaine Hampton. Corner candidates include Nick Harper, Rodregis Brooks, Clifton Crosby, Raymond Walls and third-round pick Joseph Jefferson.

In recent seasons, the Colts' secondary has been one of the worst at producing difference-making plays. And the ones that were produced generally were made by Burris. The defensive backs have collected just 33 interceptions since 1998, including only eight last year. **GRADE: C-**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Changes were in order after a season in which inconsistency plagued virtually all phases. They began at the top. Russ Purnell replaced Kevin Spencer as special teams coach. Purnell helped build a solid special teams unit in Baltimore; similar work is required in Indianapolis. The Colts generally have been able to rely on a competent kicking game and productive returns, but their coverage has been spotty at best. They were 30th in punt coverage and 26th on kickoffs in 2001.

A defensive-oriented draft should inject speed and aggressiveness into the mix. Also, some individuals who played well a year ago—Sword, Crosby, Bird and Doering among them—should play at a higher level.

The team lost one of the league's premier return men when it traded restricted free agent Wilkins to the Rams. Troy Walters, a waiver pickup from the Vikings, brings skills in both punt and kickoff returns. Rhodes may return to handling kickoffs. He aver-

REALIGNMENT reality

The Colts didn't go kicking and screaming into the AFC South—it was their neighborhood of choice. The team is built to excel indoors and in warm weather. So instead of those nasty late-season divisional visits to Orchard Park, N.Y., Foxboro, Mass., and East Rutherford, N.J., the Colts can anticipate trips to Houston, Jacksonville and Nashville. The team shouldn't have to face much inclement weather, though games November 24 at Denver and December 15 at Cleveland offer that potential. Good conditions are a plus for this offense. AFC South competition also could help facilitate the team's recovery from last year's disappointing finish. Tennessee should bounce back and contend after sagging to 7-9 in 2001, but Jacksonville is in a serious rebuilding mode and expansion Houston will need some time to get its act together. The Colts should have a good shot at going 5-1 or 4-2 in the division.



MARK BOLTON FOR TSN

Harrison could become the first NFL player to catch at least 100 passes four years in a row.

aged 25.4 yards on 14 returns and had an 88-yard touchdown before being taken off special teams so he could concentrate on playing running back in place of James.

The kicking game is sound. Mike Vanderjagt has established himself as the most accurate kicker in league history, having made 114 of 130 field-goal attempts (87.7 percent). He also brings a strong leg, having converted 10 of 16 field-goal attempts of at least 50 yards.

Punter Hunter Smith got little help from his coverage team a year ago, but he remains reliable. **GRADE: C**

BOTTOM LINE No one expects Dungy to be a miracle worker. That's fine, because a miracle isn't required. If Dungy's touch and an influx of speed and athleticism can elevate the defense from awful to average, a return to the playoffs certainly is within reach. The Manning-led offense remains one of the NFL's most potent, and the new AFC South shouldn't be one of the league's toughest neighborhoods. **TSN**

Mike Chappell covers the Colts for the Indianapolis Star.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Qadry Ismail
	□ Desmond Kitchens
LT	● Tarik Glenn
	■ Waverly Jackson
LG	□ Rick DeMulling
	□ Jim Pyne
C	■ Jeff Saturday
	□ Mike Souza
RG	■ Ryan Diem
	□ Rob Murphy
RT	● Adam Meadows
	□ Kurt Vollers
TE	● Marcus Pollard
	■ Jermaine Wiggins
WR	■ Reggie Wayne
	□ Troy Walters
WR	● Marvin Harrison
	□ Drew Haddad
QB	● Peyton Manning
	□ Brock Huard
RB	● Edgerrin James
	■ Dominic Rhodes

Defense

LE	□ Chukie Nwokorie
	□ Brad Scioli
LT	■ Josh Williams
	□ James Cannida
RT	■ Ellis Johnson
	■ Larry Tripplett
RE	■ Chad Bratzke
	■ Dwight Freeney
SLB	■ Marcus Washington
	■ Greg Favors
MLB	■ Rob Morris
	□ Sam Sword
WLB	● Mike Peterson
	■ Donnel Thompson
LCB	■ Walt Harris
	□ Rodregis Brooks
RCB	□ David Macklin
	□ Nick Harper
SS	□ Cory Bird
	□ Jermaine Hampton
FS	■ Idrees Bashir
	□ Jason Doering

Specialists

K	● Mike Vanderjagt
P	■ Hunter Smith
KR	■ Dominic Rhodes
PR	□ Troy Walters
LS	■ Justin Snow
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

COLTS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
7	Huard, Brock	6-4/232	4-15-76	4	Washington	T-Sea/02	1/0
18	Manning, Peyton	6-5/230	3-24-76	5	Tennessee	D1/98	16/16

Running backs

43	Allen, Brian	5-9/205	4-20-80	R	Stanford	D6c/02	—
36	Finn, Jim	6-0/235	12-9-76	3	Pennsylvania	FA/00	15/0
32	James, Edgerrin	6-0/214	8-1-78	4	Miami (Fla.)	D1/99	6/6
44	Ours, Wes	6-0/284	12-30-77	2	West Virginia	FA/01	3/1
33	Rhodes, Dominic	5-9/208	1-17-79	2	Midwestern State	FA/01	15/10

Receivers

80	Davenport, Joe D. (TE)	6-6/273	10-29-76	2	Arkansas	FA/01	3/0
84	Haddad, Drew	5-11/187	8-15-78	2	Buffalo	FA/01	0/0
88	Harrison, Marvin	6-0/178	8-25-72	7	Syracuse	D1/96	16/16
83	Ismail, Qadry	6-0/200	11-8-70	10	Syracuse	FA/02	16/15
	Kitchings, Desmond	5-9/178	7-19-78	1	Furman	FA/01	0/0
81	Pollard, Marcus (TE)	6-3/248	2-8-72	8	Bradley	FA/95	16/16
48	Snow, Justin (TE)	6-3/234	12-21-76	3	Baylor	FA/00	16/0
85	Walters, Troy	5-7/173	12-15-76	3	Stanford	D5/00	6/0
87	Wayne, Reggie	6-0/203	11-17-78	2	Miami (Fla.)	D1/01	13/9
	Wiggins, Jermaine (TE)	6-2/255	1-18-75	3	Georgia	FA/02	16/6

Offensive linemen

64	DeMulling, Rick (G)	6-3/304	7-21-77	2	Idaho	D7/01	7/0
71	Diem, Ryan (G)	6-6/332	7-1-79	2	Northern Illinois	D4/01	15/8
78	Glenn, Tarik (T)	6-5/332	5-25-76	6	California	D1/97	16/16
74	Jackson, Waverly (T)	6-2/343	12-19-72	5	Virginia Tech	FA/98	16/0
73	Meadows, Adam (T)	6-5/289	1-25-74	6	Georgia	D2/97	15/15
61	Murphy, Rob (G)	6-5/330	1-18-77	1	Ohio State	FA/02	0/0
	Pyne, Jim	6-2/297	11-23-71	9	Virginia Tech	UFA/02	5/1
63	Saturday, Jeff (C)	6-2/293	6-8-75	4	North Carolina	FA/99	16/16
69	Souza, Mike (C)	6-5/303	4-22-79	R	Northwestern	FA/02	—
76	Vollers, Kurt (T)	6-7/317	4-4-79	R	Notre Dame	FA/02	—

Defensive linemen

92	Bratzke, Chad (E)	6-5/272	9-15-71	9	Eastern Kentucky	UFA/99	15/14
97	Cannida, James (T)	6-2/305	1-3-75	5	Nevada	UFA/02	12/2
93	Freeney, Dwight (E)	6-1/266	2-19-80	R	Syracuse	D1/02	—
62	Johnson, Ellis (T)	6-2/288	10-30-73	7	Florida	D1/95	16/16
68	Mallard, Josh (E)	6-1/261	3-21-79	R	Georgia	D7/02	—
91	Nwokorie, Chukie (E)	6-3/280	7-10-75	4	Purdue	FA/99	16/6
67	Olsen, Hans (T)	6-4/298	7-31-77	2	Brigham Young	FA/01	2/0
95	Pugh, David (T)	6-2/270	7-24-79	R	Virginia Tech	D6a/02	—
99	Scioli, Brad (E)	6-3/280	9-6-76	4	Penn State	D5/99	13/12
75	Tripplett, Larry (T)	6-1/305	1-18-79	R	Washington	D2/02	—
96	Williams, Josh (T)	6-3/284	8-9-76	3	Michigan	D4/00	16/16

Linebackers

51	Favors, Greg	6-1/244	9-30-74	5	Mississippi State	UFA/02	16/13
94	Morris, Rob	6-2/243	1-18-75	3	Brigham Young	D1/00	14/14
52	Peterson, Mike	6-1/232	6-17-76	4	Florida	D2/99	9/9
98	Sword, Sam	6-1/245	12-4-74	4	Michigan	FA/00	16/2
54	Thompson, Donnel	6-0/234	2-17-78	3	Wisconsin	FA/01	4/0
50	Thornnton, David	6-2/236	11-11-78	R	North Carolina	D4/02	—
53	Washington, Marcus	6-3/255	10-17-77	3	Auburn	D2/00	16/16

Defensive backs

28	Bashir, Idrees	6-2/198	12-7-78	2	Memphis	D2/01	15/15
41	Bird, Cory	5-10/216	8-10-78	2	Virginia Tech	D3/01	14/0
26	Brooks, Rodregis (CB)	5-9/184	8-30-78	3	Alabama-Birmingham	D7b/00	5/0
31	Crosby, Clifton (CB)	5-10/172	9-17-74	3	Maryland	FA/00	14/0
34	Doering, Jason	6-0/200	4-22-78	2	Wisconsin	D6/01	16/1
47	Hampton, Jermaine	6-0/219	6-12-79	R	Northern Illinois	FA/01	10/0
25	Harper, Nick	5-10/184	9-10-74	2	Fort Valley State	FA/01	13/2
21	Harris, Walt (CB)	5-11/195	8-10-74	7	Mississippi State	UFA/02	15/13
29	Jefferson, Joseph (CB)	5-11/205	2-15-80	R	Western Kentucky	D3/02	—
37	Lewis, James (S)	5-10/192	12-19-78	R	Miami (Fla.)	D6b/02	—
27	Macklin, David	5-9/193	7-14-78	3	Penn State	D3/00	16/16
42	Walls, Raymond (CB)	5-10/175	7-24-79	2	Southern Mississippi	D5/01	4/0

Specialists

17	Smith, Hunter (P)	6-2/212	8-9-77	4	Notre Dame	D7a/99	16/0
13	Vanderjagt, Mike (K)	6-5/210	3-24-70	5	West Virginia	FA/98	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: QB Cory Sauter, RB Shyrone Stith.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Jaguars

Brunell, who turns 32 in September, isn't as mobile as he used to be.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

BY BART HUBBUCH

For the Jaguars, January 23, 2000 seems like a long, long time ago. The calendar says just 2½ years have passed since Jacksonville was one step away from the Super Bowl. But for the few remaining players who participated in the devastating 33-14 loss to Tennessee in the AFC championship game, it feels more like two decades.

Slugged by injuries and a salary-cap reckoning that robbed the franchise of some of its most familiar and beloved faces, the Jaguars enter this season in full-scale rebuilding mode.

"We've got to get this thing back on the right track," owner Wayne Weaver says. "It's

not going to be an easy process. It could be very painful."

Pain is nothing new to the Jaguars, considering all the torn ligaments and broken bones they endured the past two seasons—both of which, not coincidentally, ended with losing records. And if the injuries weren't bad enough, the Jaguars' wild spending in free agency in the late 1990s finally caught up with them this offseason.

Perhaps the most shocking development after the Jaguars' 6-10 finish in 2001 was the return of autocratic coach Tom Coughlin, who might not survive a third straight losing season.

Coughlin must rebuild quickly in the new AFC South, because the love affair between

the Jaguars and their fan base has cooled considerably. Attendance is down, and the club suffered its first three home television blackouts in 2001.

COACHING Strategies—

Coughlin isn't leaving anything to chance this season. The Bob Petrino experiment didn't work out last season, so Coughlin again will serve as his own offensive coordinator after calling the plays in 1999 and 2000.

As an offensive coordinator, Coughlin has absorbed his share of criticism. Fans grumbled about his conservative play-calling two years ago, and few applauded his decision to don the headset again. But it's hard to dispute his results. The Jaguars were within two quarters of the Super Bowl after the 1999 season, thanks to one of the league's most explosive attacks, and ranked seventh in the NFL in offense in 2000 despite finishing 7-9.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	INDIANAPOLIS	1:00	Nov. 10	WASHINGTON	4:05
Sept. 15	at Kansas City	1:00	Nov. 17	at Houston	4:15
Sept. 22	Open date		Nov. 24	at Dallas	1:00
Sept. 29	N.Y. JETS	1:00	Dec. 1	PITTSBURGH	1:00
Oct. 6	PHILADELPHIA	4:15	Dec. 8	CLEVELAND	1:00
Oct. 13	at Tennessee	1:00	Dec. 15	at Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 20	at Baltimore	1:00	Dec. 22	TENNESSEE	1:00
Oct. 27	HOUSTON	4:15	Dec. 29	at Indianapolis	4:05
Nov. 3	at N.Y. Giants	8:30	Strength of schedule: 21st		

By promoting Petrino from quarterbacks coach to coordinator before last season, Coughlin relented to pressure to install a buffer between he and quarterback Mark Brunell. That test failed, and the over-matched Petrino resigned after the Jaguars plummeted to 20th in the league in total yards.

The defense also is in different hands for the third time in four years. Upset by repeated fourth-quarter collapses, Coughlin fired coordinator Gary Moeller after one season and replaced him with trusted aide John Pease, who promises a much different look this year. Moeller was criticized for a passive scheme that emphasized zone coverage and was far too soft late in games. Pease vows to be more aggressive, with increased use of man-to-man coverage and zone blitzes.

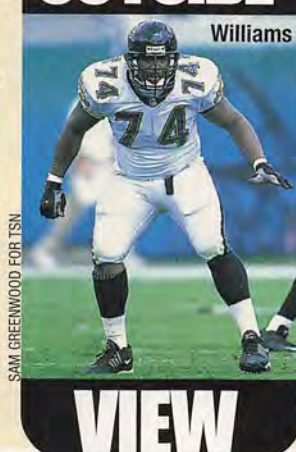
Meanwhile, veteran special teams coach Frank Ganz Sr. retired after two seasons with the club and was replaced by his top aide, John Bonamego.

Style—Coughlin's gruff, impersonal approach could be excused while the Jaguars were reaching the AFC title game twice in a four-year span. But in the wake of back-to-back losing seasons, it's starting to wear thin

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

They lost three out of four starting defensive linemen—**Seth Payne** and **Gary Walker** to the Texans in the expansion draft and **Rinaldo Wynn** in free agency. Drafting **John Henderson** should help them, if he plays to his giant body. And if **Marcus Stroud** plays to his big body, there's two guys who will help. They picked up **Stalin Colinet** and **Tim Morabito**, but they're not front-line guys. ... They've got to protect **Mark Brunell**. Last year, they went through a couple of left tackles and when (running back) **Fred Taylor** went down, that put more pressure on Brunell, and he took some shots. Obviously, when you get to be his age, that's a problem. ... **Jimmy Smith** is still as good as it gets as a receiver. They picked up **Bobby Shaw**, who's

OUTSIDE



THE JAGUARS

an improvement over **Keenan McCardell**, but not much. They're similar—he's a good possession receiver, like McCardell. There's just an age difference. All they're doing by letting McCardell go is jettisoning money. ... They drafted **Mike Pearson** ostensibly to take **Tony Boselli's** place (at left tackle). But what we think they're going to do is move **Maurice Williams**, who played pretty well for them at right tackle as a rookie, to left tackle and use Pearson as the right tackle. They signed **Chris Naeole**, and he should help them in the interior. ... They've got a young running back, **Elvis Joseph** (an undrafted rookie last season), who they're hoping will come through to be a backup to Taylor. He had a pretty good year in the limited time he played.

on players and fans alike. Coughlin responded by purging many of the disgruntled veterans who had tired of his constant harping and replaced them mostly with rookies and second-year players just happy to be in an NFL uniform.

On the other hand, Coughlin has no solution to the fan grumbling. There was a huge clamor for Weaver to replace Coughlin with former Florida coach Steve Spurrier in January; he instead stuck with Coughlin and later gave him a contract extension through 2004. The result was the lowest season-ticket total in team history.

To his credit, Coughlin realizes he has a young, impressionable team and has to ease up on the reins. It's unknown whether he's

capable of doing so.

Pease is much more affable than his boss and is popular with most of the team's veteran defensive players, many of whom didn't like Moeller's strategy.

On offense, Coughlin brought in well-traveled assistant John Hufnagel as quarterbacks coach. Hufnagel is considered a low-key, all-business type but should be a good sounding board for Brunell. **GRADE: B-**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Unless the Jaguars add a veteran backup in training camp, their quarterback situation will remain precarious. Brunell still is capable of a Pro Bowl season, but the depth is disconcertingly thin.

Brunell is coming off one of his better seasons, at least statistically. He completed 61 percent of his passes for 3,309 yards and 19 touchdowns despite being sacked a league-high 57 times. But he will turn 32 in September, and he isn't nearly as mobile as he was in the late '90s. He's tough, as witnessed by his 15 games played last season, but he might not be able to take another season-long beating.

Brunell's psyche also is a question mark. He was irate that the Jaguars let left tackle Tony Boselli—his closest friend on the team—go in the expansion draft, and the departure of security-blanket receiver Keenan McCardell didn't sit well with him, either.

The Jaguars allowed longtime backup Jonathan Quinn to become an unrestricted free agent and appeared to replace him in the draft by taking East Carolina's David Garrard in the fourth round. Garrard (6-1, 237) is in the Daunte Culpepper mold: big and nimble with a cannon arm. But he was not the most accurate passer in college and didn't always make the right decisions (witness his 39 career interceptions). Garrard appears to be a project, but barring the addition of a veteran, he will go into camp as the No. 2 quarterback.

Roderick Robinson also has Culpepper-

type size (6-3, 235) but is a scattershot passer and did not play in '01. **GRADE: C+**

Running backs—The team almost is out of patience with Fred Taylor, who has superstar ability but can't stay on the field because of endless injury problems. He hasn't played a full season since joining the NFL in 1998 and is coming off a season in which he played only six quarters because of a groin tear.

Coughlin thought Taylor was healthy enough to return late last season, but Taylor disagreed. That tiff might explain why the Jaguars dangled Taylor on the trade market before eventually deciding to keep him.

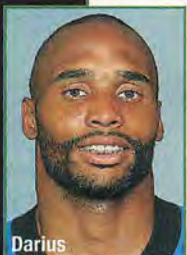
Even though he has two 1,200-yard rushing seasons to his credit, Taylor no longer is on firm ground with the team. If the player dubbed "Fragile Fred" can't make it through at least 10 games this year, he could be wearing a different uniform next season.

The Jaguars might have even less patience with Taylor because backup Stacey Mack rushed for a career-high 877 yards and nine touchdowns in 11 starts last season. The team likes Mack's bullish, straight-ahead running style and his strong work ethic, the latter of which helped to weather an early-

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. RB Fred Taylor will miss at least one game because of injury. Taylor has great ability but has been riddled with injury troubles in his first four seasons.
2. WR Jimmy Smith will have another 100-catch season. It won't be easy without Keenan McCardell to draw coverage, but Smith seems to be getting better with age.
3. QB Mark Brunell will join Taylor on the sideline. For him to get safely through 16 games behind a young, retooled line is asking too much.
4. SS Donovan Darius will make the Pro Bowl. New coordinator John Pease intends to make Darius the star of the defense. The hard-hitting veteran is up to the task.
5. Tom Coughlin's job security will be questioned. Consecutive losing seasons have put him on the hot seat with the fans. Owner Wayne Weaver's loyalty to Coughlin might be running low, too.



Darius

2001 results

Sept. 9	PITTSBURGH	W	21-3
Sept. 23	TENNESSEE	W	13-6
Sept. 30	CLEVELAND	L	14-23
Oct. 7	at Seattle	L	15-24
Oct. 14	Open date		
Oct. 18	BUFFALO	L	10-13
Oct. 28	at Baltimore	L	17-18
Nov. 4	at Tennessee	L	24-28
Nov. 11	CINCINNATI	W	30-13
Nov. 18	at Pittsburgh	L	7-20
Nov. 25	BALTIMORE	L	21-24
Dec. 3	GREEN BAY	L	21-28
Dec. 9	at Cincinnati	W	14-10
Dec. 16	at Cleveland	W	15-10
Dec. 23	at Minnesota	W	33-3
Dec. 30	KANSAS CITY	L	26-30
Jan. 6	at Chicago	L	13-33

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The imposing Stroud plays too high out of his stance, making him vulnerable to cut blocks.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

season stint in Coughlin's doghouse because of fumbles.

At the No. 3 spot, Elvis Joseph, picked up as an undrafted free agent last year, has soft hands and shows promise as a third-down back.

The Jaguars aren't as deep at fullback, but they are in better shape than they were in 2001. Detron Smith was signed away from Denver to compete with Patrick Washington, who struggled in the job as an undrafted rookie last season. But Smith was brought in more for his special teams work, and it's not as though fans will see much of the fullbacks anyway. Coughlin prefers using alignments with two tight ends. **GRADE: B**

Receivers—Coughlin and Weaver took a major gamble by breaking up the duo of McCardell and Jimmy Smith—one of the most prolific receiving combinations in NFL history. McCardell, a fan favorite, was let go after the club decided it needed to get younger at receiver. Smith was retained because of the massive salary-cap hit the team would take by cutting or trading him.

McCardell didn't have blazing speed, but he ran the crispest routes on the team and arguably was its most sure-handed receiver. The Jaguars replaced him with two speedy but unproven free agents: Patrick Johnson and Bobby Shaw. Johnson is one of the quickest receivers in the league but has been plagued by injuries. Shaw is a physical

receiver in the McCardell mold who is hungry for a chance to start, something he didn't get with the Steelers.

The plan is to pair one or both with Smith, who seems to be getting better with age. Many wondered whether Smith, 33, would ever play again after a series of abdominal surgeries a year ago. He made the Pro Bowl for the fifth straight year after starting all 16 games and catching 112 passes for 1,373 yards and eight touchdowns.

The team lacks experienced depth at the position. Damon Gibson almost is strictly a punt returner, Micah Ross is athletic but raw and seventh-round draft pick Kendall Newson has an uphill fight to make the roster. Former No. 1 pick R. Jay Soward has been suspended for the season by the NFL and will be cut by the Jaguars as soon as that suspension ends.

The Jaguars are set at tight end, with veterans Kyle Brady and Pete Mitchell forming a solid combination that suits Coughlin's preference for double-tight end formations. Reserve Ryan Prince shows promise, though he will be pushed for a roster spot by mountainous fourth-round pick Chris Luzar (6-7, 260). **GRADE: C+**

Line—This unit will have to work at being worse than it was in 2001, when it yielded a franchise-record 63 sacks. Major shuffling is on tap for this season. Of last year's starters, only second-year right tackle Maurice Williams figures to be back in the same spot.

Boselli's departure left a gaping hole at left tackle that second-round pick Mike Pearson will be given the first shot to fill. That's a tall order, though the Jaguars are hoping Pearson can live up to his "Baby Boselli" college nickname.

The situation is a little more settled at the two guard spots, which are expected to be manned by veteran Zach Wiegert and free-agent addition Chris Naeole. Wiegert likely will move to right guard to replace steady Brad Meester, who will be switched to his natural position at center.

Depth along the line is an even bigger worry than the unit's troubles with pass protection. The only experienced backup is Todd Fordham, who struggled as the emergency starter at left tackle last season but was brought back because he knows the system. Other potential backups include guard Aaron Koch, tackle Patrick Venzke and guard/tackle Chris Ziemann. **GRADE: D**

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-9	John Henderson	DT	Tennessee	Fills a need and is expected to start immediately.
2-40	Mike Pearson	OT	Florida	Some have called him "Baby Boselli." Jags hope description fits.
3-89	Akin Ayodele	LB	Purdue	Too small to play his college position, defensive end, in the pros.
4-108	David Garrard	QB	East Carolina	Should fill No. 2 QB role. Coughlin likes his size, arm and mobility.
4-118	Chris Luzar	TE	Virginia	Considered a better receiver than blocker.
6-180	Clenton Ballard	DT	SW Texas State	Strictly a project; probably a reach even in the sixth round.
7-222	Kendall Newson	WR	Middle Tenn. State	Very productive college player but isn't particularly fast.
7-246	Steve Smith	DB	Oregon	Can play safety and cornerback; could emerge as No. 4 corner.
7-247	Hayden Epstein	K	Michigan	Yet another body in camp to challenge Holmes for kicking job.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-21	Renaldo Wynn	DT	Notre Dame	Starter with Redskins
'98-9	Fred Taylor	RB	Florida	Starter with Jaguars
'98-25	Donovin Darius	DB	Syracuse	Starter with Jaguars
'99-26	Fernando Bryant	CB	Alabama	Starter with Jaguars
'00-29	R. Jay Soward	WR	Southern California	Backup with Jaguars
'01-13	Marcus Stroud	DT	Georgia	Starter with Jaguars

DEFENSE Line—Throw out last season's impressive numbers, especially the No. 10 ranking in run defense. Gone is steady end Renaldo Wynn. And gone are starting tackles Gary Walker and Seth Payne, who were lost in the expansion draft. Walker had 7½ sacks and earned a trip to the Pro Bowl in his final season with the Jaguars, so his absence will be felt the most.

Aside from former Pro Bowl right end Tony Brackens, who had 11 sacks in 12 games last year, the line is full of question marks. Many of the concerns surround young tackles Marcus Stroud and John Henderson.



Five-time Pro Bowl selectee Jimmy Smith lost his running mate at wide receiver.

Stroud and Henderson are the Jaguars' last two first-round picks, and the club needs them to play up to their lofty billings because backups Larry Smith, Tim Morabito and rookie Clenton Ballard aren't considered starting material.

Stroud (6-6, 321) and Henderson (6-7, 318) certainly are imposing at first glance, but both must answer concerns about their playing style. They each tend to play too high out of their stance, making them vulnerable to cut blocks.

Replacing Wynn at left end is another concern. The Jaguars like Paul Spicer's non-stop intensity, but he was an undrafted free agent. The club would like make an upgrade at the position, where it continues to groom 2000 seventh-round pick Rob Meier. The Jaguars also added journeyman Stalin Colinet to the mix in the offseason. **GRADE: D**

Linebackers—Like the defensive line, this unit will have a much different look after cap woes forced the club to jettison starters Kevin Hardy and Hardy Nickerson.

The only returnee with significant experience is third-year pro T.J. Slaughter, who remains the starter on the weak side but

must show he is completely healed from a significant knee injury. The Jaguars also don't know if former seventh-round pick Danny Clark is capable of starting on the strong side, and depth is a pressing concern at both outside spots.

The Jaguars considered moving Slaughter to the middle until swinging a draft-day trade with the Browns for Wali Rainer, who will be given the first shot at replacing Nickerson. Rainer's only backup is Joe Tuipala, considered almost strictly a special teams player.

The club hopes third-round pick Akin Ayodele, a sack specialist and college end, can develop along the lines of weakside line-backer Eric Westmoreland, a 2001 third-round pick who has showed flashes of ability. But a crew of backups that includes Edward Thomas, Donny Green and Joe Wesley doesn't inspire confidence. **GRADE: C**

Secondary—Veteran strong safety Donovan Darius lifted the Jaguars last year by making an amazingly quick recovery from a fractured hip. He was back by early November and was the club's most consistent playmaker on defense by the end of the season. Pease has even bigger plans for Darius this year, envisioning him as the centerpiece of the scheme. Darius also will be expected to provide leadership for an otherwise young defense.

But Darius may be the only player the Jaguars can count on in their secondary. The cornerback spots are unsettled because of Fernando Bryant's chronic foot problems and Jason Craft's inexperience. The Jaguars think they have a couple of young gems in Craft and nickel corner Kiwauke Thomas, both of whom impressed the coaches last year after being forced into the lineup because of injuries to Bryant and the since-departed Aaron Beasley.

Pease wants to use more man-to-man coverage, though it's unclear whether Bryant and Craft are big enough and fast enough to do so. Bryant, in particular, has slumped since an impressive rookie season in 1999.

There figures to be another heated battle for playing time at free safety, where Ainsley Battles will be pushed by Marlon McCree and James Boyd. Seventh-round pick Steve Smith and former undrafted free agents Renard Cox and Damen Wheeler also are in the mix. **GRADE: C+**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Jaguars' new look extends to their special teams, which will feature a field-goal kicker other than Mike Hollis for the first time in franchise history. Hollis was allowed to depart as a free agent after feuding with Coughlin and missing 10 field-goal attempts last season.

The Jaguars re-signed Jaret Holmes after bringing him in last December to handle kickoffs, and he appears to have the early advantage over Derek Schorejs and seventh-round pick Hayden Epstein. But don't be surprised if the club brings a proven kicker

Moves

Key additions

DE Stalin Colinet
WR Patrick Johnson
TE Pete Mitchell
DT Tim Morabito
G Chris Naeole
LB Wali Rainer
WR Bobby Shaw
FB Detron Smith
OT Chris Ziemann

Free agent/Vikings
Free agent/Ravens
Free agent/Lions
Free agent/Panthers
Free agent/Saints
Trade/Browns
Free agent/Steelers
Free agent/Broncos
Free agent/Giants

Key losses

CB Aaron Beasley
OT Tony Boselli
WR Sean Dawkins
LB Kevin Hardy
K Mike Hollis
TE Damon Jones
WR Keenan McCardell
LB Hardy Nickerson
DT Seth Payne
QB Jonathan Quinn
LB Jeff Posey
C Jeff Smith
DT Gary Walker
DE Renaldo Wynn

Free agent/Jets
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Vikings
Free agent/Cowboys
Free agent/Bills
Free agent
Free agent
Free agent
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent
Free agent/Texans
Free agent/Titans
Expansion draft/Texans
Free agent/Redskins

Stadium/Media

ALLTEL Stadium (73,000, grass).

Ticket information: 904-633-2000.

Training site: ALLTEL Stadium, Jacksonville, Fla.; 904-633-6000.

Radio: WOKV-AM (690).

Website: www.jaguars.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 6-10 (5th in AFC Central); 5-5 in division; 5-8 in conference; 1-2 vs. NFC; 3-5 at home; 3-5 on road; 1-1 on artificial turf; 5-9 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Tom Coughlin's regular-season record: 62-50 in seven seasons with Jaguars.

Coughlin's postseason record: 4-4 in four appearances with Jaguars.

Team record last five years: 49-31 (.613, ranks T5th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*302.5	10	20
Rushing offense	*100.0	15	26
Passing offense	*202.5	8	18
Scoring offense	294	13	T21
Total defense	*316.9	T7	T16
Rushing defense	*100.7	6	10
Passing defense	*216.2	12	22
Scoring defense	286	4	10
Takeaways	24	T13	T25
Giveaways	27	T5	T9
Turnover differential	-3	9	T18
Sacks	43	T4	T10
Sacks allowed	63	16	29

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Tom Coughlin	Head coach	16	8
John Pease	Asst. HC/def. coordinator	17	8
John Bonamego	Special teams coordinator	4	4
Perry Fewell	Secondary	5	5
Greg Finnegan	Asst. strength & cond.	5	5
John Hufnagel	Quarterbacks	4	1
Jerald Ingram	Running backs	8	8
Ty Knott	Offensive quality control	1	1
Mike Maser	Offensive line	8	8
John McNulty	Wide receivers	5	5
Jerry Palmieri	Strength & conditioning	8	8
Mike Priefer	Assistant special teams	1	1
Lucious Selmon	Defensive line	8	8
Tony Sparano	Tight ends	4	1
Mike Sullivan	Def. quality control	1	1
Steve Szabo	Linebackers	8	8

REALIGNMENT reality

Considering that an 8-8 record would have won this division last year, the Jaguars aren't at all upset about joining the Colts, Titans and expansion Texans in the new AFC South. The division will be a challenge for new defensive coordinator John Pease, who must worry about facing Peyton Manning, Edgerrin James, Steve McNair and Eddie George twice a year. But the relative weakness of the South gives the Jaguars a chance to rebuild quickly. Best of all, there are no more annual trips to potentially frigid Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Cincinnati. Instead, the team gets temperate Nashville, a dome in Indianapolis and a retractable dome in Houston. Though owner Wayne Weaver was miffed at not joining state rival Miami in realignment, the new division won't hurt ticket sales. Manning will be a draw, as will the archrival Titans and Houston, with former Jaguars Tony Boselli, Gary Walker and Seth Payne on the roster.



Brackens is one of the few non-question marks in the Jaguars' revamped defensive line.

to training camp.

No such concerns exist at punter, where Chris Hanson came out of nowhere to rank fourth in the NFL with a 37.1-yard net average last season. His strength is great hang time.

Gibson has impressed the coaching staff with his toughness and fearlessness on punt returns, but he has no breakaway ability and could be replaced. The picture is brighter on kickoff returns; Joseph, who broke off a 95-yard scoring return last season, is a serious threat. Long snapper Joe Zelenka, brought in late in training camp last year, held up well, prompting the team to re-sign him.

GRADE: C

BOTTOM LINE The Jaguars' roster is young and thin, so any repeat of the injuries that plagued them the past two seasons would be disastrous. If the trio of Brunell, Taylor and Jimmy Smith can stay healthy, Jacksonville will be dangerous—especially in a new division seriously lacking in defense. But Coughlin will have to do one of the best coaching jobs of his career to get the Jaguars above .500.

TSN

Bart Hubbuch covers the Jaguars for *The Florida Times-Union*.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Jimmy Smith
	□ Patrick Johnson
LT	■ Mike Pearson
	□ Todd Fordham
LG	■ Zach Wiegert
	□ Aaron Koch
C	● Brad Meester
	□ John Wade
RG	■ Chris Naeole
	□ Aaron Koch
RT	● Maurice Williams
	□ Chris Ziemann
TE	● Kyle Brady
	■ Pete Mitchell
WR	● Bobby Shaw
	□ Patrick Johnson
QB	● Mark Brunell
	□ David Garrard
RB	● Fred Taylor
	■ Stacey Mack
FB	■ Detron Smith
	□ Patrick Washington

Defense

LE	■ Paul Spicer
	□ Stalin Colinet
LT	■ John Henderson
	□ Tim Morabito
RT	■ Marcus Stroud
	□ Larry Smith
RE	● Tony Brackens
	□ Rob Meier
WLB	● T.J. Slaughter
	■ Eric Westmoreland
MLB	■ Wali Rainer
	□ Joe Tuipala
SLB	■ Danny Clark
	■ Akin Ayodele
LCB	■ Fernando Bryant
	■ Kiwaake Thomas
RCB	■ Jason Craft
	□ Damien Wheeler
SS	● Donovan Darius
	■ James Boyd
FS	■ Ainsley Battles
	■ Marlon McCree

Specialists

K	□ Jaret Holmes
P	● Chris Hanson
KR	■ Elvis Joseph
PR	□ Damon Gibson
LS	■ Joe Zelenka
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

JAGUARS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
8	Brunell, Mark	6-1/217	9-17-70	10	Washington	T-GB/95	15/15
9	Garrard, David	6-1/237	2-14-78	R	East Carolina	D4a/02	—
10	Robinson, Roderick	6-3/229	5-17-76	2	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	W-Ind/01	0/0
Running backs							
35	Joseph, Elvis	6-1/213	8-30-78	2	Southern	FA/01	14/3
34	Mack, Stacey (FB)	6-1/237	6-26-75	4	Temple	FA/99	16/11
33	Smith, Detron (FB)	5-10/230	2-25-74	7	Texas A&M	FA/02	15/0
28	Taylor, Fred	6-1/231	1-27-76	5	Florida	D1a/98	2/2
31	Washington, Patrick (FB)	6-2/244	3-4-78	2	Virginia	FA/01	16/6
22	White, Reggie	6-0/228	7-11-79	2	Oklahoma State	FA/02	5/0
Receivers							
80	Brady, Kyle (TE)	6-6/277	1-14-72	8	Penn State	TFA/99	16/16
85	Gibson, Damon	5-9/184	2-25-75	3	Iowa	FA/00	16/0
84	Johnson, Patrick	5-10/191	8-10-76	5	Oregon	FA/02	4/0
47	Luzar, Chris (TE)	6-7/260	2-12-79	R	Virginia	D4b/02	—
48	Mitchell, Pete (TE)	6-2/248	10-9-71	7	Boston College	UFA/01	5/1
14	Newson, Kendall	6-1/195	3-5-80	R	Middle Tennessee	D7a/02	—
89	Prince, Ryan (TE)	6-4/265	5-16-77	2	Weber State	FA/01	8/2
86	Ross, Micah	6-3/220	1-13-76	1	Jacksonville	FA/01	5/0
16	Shaw, Bobby	6-0/186	4-23-75	5	California	UFA/02	16/0
82	Smith, Jimmy	6-1/213	2-9-69	10	Jackson State	FA/95	16/16
88	Zelenka, Joe (TE)	6-3/280	3-9-76	4	Wake Forest	FA/01	16/0
Offensive linemen							
	Clayton, Carey (C)	6-3/285	8-31-77	R	Texas-El Paso	FA/01	1/0
79	Fordham, Todd (T)	6-5/315	10-9-73	6	Florida State	FA/01	12/12
64	Koch, Aaron (G)	6-3/300	2-21-78	3	Oregon State	FA/00	16/1
63	Meester, Brad (G)	6-3/308	3-23-77	3	Northern Iowa	D2/00	16/16
65	Naeole, Chris (G)	6-3/313	12-25-74	6	Colorado	UFA/02	16/16
72	Pearson, Mike (T)	6-7/304	8-2-80	R	Florida	D2/02	—
70	Venzke, Patrick (T)	6-6/306	4-6-75	2	Idaho	FA/01	0/0
66	Wade, John (C)	6-5/300	1-25-75	5	Marshall	D5/98	15/0
77	Wiegert, Zach (T)	6-5/310	8-16-72	8	Nebraska	FA/99	16/16
74	Williams, Maurice (T)	6-5/307	1-26-79	2	Michigan	D2/01	16/16
	Ziemann, Chris (T)	6-8/307	9-20-76	2	Michigan	FA/02	0/0
Defensive linemen							
61	Ballard, Clenton (T)	6-3/315	4-17-79	R	Southwest Texas St.	D6/02	—
90	Brackens, Tony (E)	6-4/265	12-26-74	7	Texas	D2a/96	12/12
93	Colinet, Stalin (T)	6-6/288	7-17-74	6	Boston College	FA/02	16/11
98	Henderson, John (T)	6-7/318	1-9-79	R	Tennessee	D1/02	—
92	Meier, Rob (E)	6-5/285	8-29-77	3	Washington State	D7b/00	16/0
96	Morabito, Tim (T)	6-3/300	10-12-73	5	Boston College	FA/02	0/0
94	Smith, Larry (T)	6-5/300	12-4-74	4	Florida State	D2/99	7/0
95	Spicer, Paul (E)	6-4/292	8-18-75	3	Saginaw Valley St.	FA/00	16/4
99	Stroud, Marcus (T)	6-6/321	6-25-78	2	Georgia	D1/01	16/0
Linebackers							
51	Ayodele, Akin	6-2/257	9-17-79	R	Purdue	D3/02	—
55	Clark, Danny	6-2/240	5-9-77	3	Illinois	D7d/00	13/3
54	Green, Donny	6-2/238	9-18-77	1	Virginia	FA/01	2/0
58	Rainer, Wali	6-2/245	4-19-77	4	Virginia	T-Cle/02	14/13
53	Slaughter, T.J.	6-0/239	2-20-77	3	Southern Mississippi	D3/00	9/8
59	Thomas, Edward	6-1/229	9-27-74	3	Georgia Southern	FA/00	16/4
57	Tuipala, Joe	6-1/244	9-13-76	2	San Diego State	FA/01	12/0
50	Wesley, Joe	6-1/240	11-10-76	3	Louisiana State	FA/99	6/0
52	Westmoreland, Eric	6-0/234	3-11-77	2	Tennessee	D3a/01	11/2
Defensive backs							
26	Battles, Ainsley (S)	5-10/200	11-6-78	3	Vanderbilt	W-Pit/01	13/11
42	Boyd, James (S)	5-11/208	10-17-77	2	Penn State	D3b/01	16/0
25	Bryant, Fernando (CB)	5-10/180	3-26-77	4	Alabama	D1/99	10/9
36	Cox, Renard	6-0/191	3-3-78	2	Maryland	FA/01	6/0
29	Craft, Jason (CB)	5-10/178	2-13-76	4	Colorado State	D5/99	16/8
20	Darius, Donovan (S)	6-1/216	8-12-75	5	Syracuse	D1b/98	11/11
32	McCree, Marlon (S)	5-11/192	3-17-77	2	Kentucky	D7b/01	13/11
21	Smith, Steve (CB)	6-1/190	6-28-79	R	Oregon	D7b/02	—
41	Thomas, Kiwaake (CB)	5-11/190	6-19-77	3	Georgia Southern	D5/00	16/5
27	Wheeler, Damien (CB)	5-9/180	9-3-77	1	Colorado	FA/01	5/0
Specialists							
6	Epstein, Hayden (K)	6-2/214	11-16-80	R	Michigan	D7c/02	—
2	Hanson, Chris (P)	6-1/214	10-25-76	2	Marshall	FA/01	16/0
3	Holmes, Jaret (K)	6-0/216	3-3-76	2	Auburn	FA/01	4/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: DE Randy Garner, K Derek Schorejs, WR Larry Shannon. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Titans



A toe injury inhibited George, whose style is rooted in power and precise cuts.

BY JEFF LEGWOLD

The Titans say they don't do windows. They say they don't even believe in them. And in case you're asking, no, they don't think their window of opportunity for a championship is closing.

"I don't see it that way, and I don't think our players do, either," says coach Jeff Fisher. "I know people keep saying it, but we don't see the window closing. That's not our approach."

That is the 2002 season in a nutshell as the Titans set about to prove they didn't miss their chance at a championship. They finished a yard short of Super Bowl overtime after the 1999 season, then went an

NFL-best 13-3 in 2000 before dropping to 7-9 last season.

The Titans say they have filled their holes and have the "core players" to compete in the AFC. They say all the talk about windows is nonsense.

Maybe so, but this team isn't getting any younger—Steve McNair is heading into his eighth season, Eddie George his seventh—and the team has wrestled with significant salary-cap problems the last two seasons.

So whether they see a window or not, their time has to be now.

COACHING Strategies—Fisher's track record is rooted in defense and the running game. But a funny thing happened

on the way to a playoff miss last year: The team found its passing game.

The biggest challenge for the coaching staff is to keep the passing game incorporated in the team's scheme. Fisher has made no secret he wants an improved running game, and he believes he will have it with a healthy George.

But it would be a step back to reel in a part of the offense that flourished last season, especially given McNair's performance.

Defensively, the Titans played it safe last season because they didn't have the personnel to play it any other way. Well, they didn't have the personnel to play it safe, either. They didn't blitz nearly enough, and opposing quarterbacks simply picked away at the battered secondary all season.

The Titans have to find a way to get back to their attacking ways. Almost every opponent will go to a three-wide receiver set on offense to find out if the Titans have plugged the holes.

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	PHILADELPHIA	1:00	Nov. 10	HOUSTON	1:00
Sept. 15	at Dallas	1:00	Nov. 17	PITTSBURGH	1:00
Sept. 22	CLEVELAND	1:00	Nov. 24	at Baltimore	1:00
Sept. 29	at Oakland	4:15	Dec. 1	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Oct. 6	WASHINGTON	1:00	Dec. 8	INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
Oct. 13	JACKSONVILLE	1:00	Dec. 16	N.E. (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 20	Open date		Dec. 22	at Jacksonville	1:00
Oct. 27	at Cincinnati	1:00	Dec. 29	at Houston	1:00
Nov. 3	at Indianapolis	1:00	Strength of schedule: T 16th		

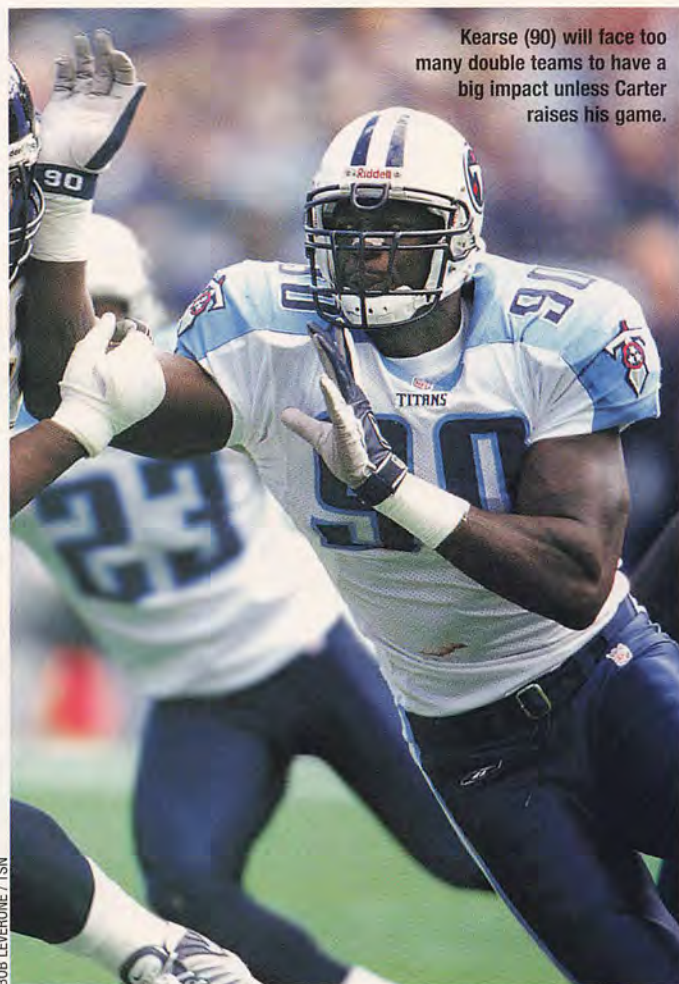
The team must do a better job of getting to the quarterback. Kevin Carter and Jevon Kearse combined for one sack in the team's last seven games. In part, that was because the Titans were using a four-man rush most of the time—and four just wasn't enough.

Style—The coaching staff didn't have any turnover from last year, and that should help. There is a good mix of seasoned veteran coaches, such as linebackers coach Gunther Cunningham, and former players who are good teachers, such as running backs coach Sherman Smith and offensive line coach Mike Munchak.

Defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz and secondary coach Everett Withers should benefit from a year of experience in their roles. Both are considered quality teachers, but their challenge is to get their message through to the players. The defense—especially the secondary—was hurt by a flurry of missed assignments last season.

Offensive coordinator Mike Heimerdinger is a vocal taskmaster who does not tolerate mistakes. In his third year as coordinator, he is hoping to blend the abilities of George and McNair so they can share the focus of the offense. Two years ago, McNair's shoulder problems led to a scheme that continued to feature George. Last year, McNair was the main weapon as George struggled with injuries. Assuming both are healthy, this is the year each will be highlighted.

ROBERT SEALE / TSN



Kearse (90) will face too many double teams to have a big impact unless Carter raises his game.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Fisher always has tried to run things so that the players aren't surprised; they know what's coming. Having been a player in the league, he stays away from petty rules. Fisher doesn't vary much from the schedule he gives to players before training camp, and he doesn't toy with their days off as a form of punishment. He also doesn't pound them unnecessarily in practice. That approach generally has worked. Fisher's teams have played hard, been physical and rarely have been shoved around even when the talent level was down.

Last year, however, the team seemed to lack on-field discipline at times. The Titans had far too many penalties, especially before the snap and after the whistle. That has to stop for the team to make a playoff run.

GRADE: B-

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—He didn't deserve much of the criticism heaped on him for the team's conservative offense in the past—he simply was following orders—but McNair should have silenced the critics last season. He deserved a Pro Bowl spot for his 3,350-yard passing effort but didn't get it. His 90.2 passer rating was the second-best of his career, and he did all that while dealing with a variety of injuries, notably by

his throwing shoulder.

McNair had surgery on his right shoulder, in the offseason. He also had surgery to help clean out a serious infection in the shoulder after the 2000 season. McNair now has a better range of motion in the arm, and there is no reason he can't put up similar numbers this year. He is in his prime and the unquestioned on-field leader of the team.

Backup Neil O'Donnell could start for several teams and has led a team (Pittsburgh) into a Super Bowl. O'Donnell is valuable because he always is prepared and presents a quality sounding board for McNair.

Billy Volek, now known as the guy who kept

David Carr on the bench at Fresno State, has a quality arm and was a good find for the Titans when he signed as an undrafted free agent in 2000. Volek won't find his way past the two quarterbacks in front of him, but he is a savvy player who handles himself well in the huddle. **GRADE: A-**

Running backs—The big question is going

to be the health of George. Can he find his old form after producing 939 rushing yards and a 3.0 average per carry last season? He never completely rebounded from toe surgery after the 2000 season and struggled to be consistent. Because his running style is rooted in power and making precise moves into holes, the toe injury affected him greatly.

George became tentative because his right foot never felt right. He shortened his stride, and he didn't pick up his feet as he had in the past. The result was more of a slide than a stride, a lot of stumbles, too many ankle tackles and a year that tested his patience.

In retrospect, it would have been better for George to miss a game or two last season, but this running back is too intense. He wants to be on the field.

This season, George will be helped by the addition of Greg Comella at fullback. Comella is a good receiver out of the backfield, so the Titans won't be as predictable in their two-back look. When the Titans lined up with two backs in the past, teams run-blitzed knowing it almost was certain to be a running play between the tackles. With Comella in the backfield, the Titans can vary the approach. Comella can be sent out on a pass pattern occasionally to keep the linebackers from cheating to the middle of the field.

But depth is a concern because neither Dan Alexander nor Mike Green appears ready for a bigger role as a ballcarrier. They have done their best work in blocking roles, but most of that work will go to Comella now. **GRADE: C+**

Receivers—Derrick Mason has become the unquestioned go-to guy. Coming off a season with 1,128 receiving yards, Mason has reliable hands, works well in traffic and wants the ball when things get tight. It's no wonder he has become McNair's favorite target on third down.

For Kevin Dyson, 2002 will be an important season. A devastating knee injury cost him most of 2000. He returned last season to produce 54 catches for 825 yards.

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-15	Albert Haynesworth	DT	Tennessee	A pick based strictly on future potential, not past production.
2-45	Tank Williams	S	Stanford	Team was looking for a corner but thought he was too good to pass up.
3-77	Rocky Calmus	LB	Oklahoma	Doesn't have great measurables, but he makes plays.
4-110	Mike Echols	DB	Wisconsin	Not very big but has the cover skills to contribute right away.
4-115	Tony Beckham	CB	Wisconsin-Stout	Has good size and speed but faces a big step up in competition.
4-133	Rocky Boiman	LB	Notre Dame	Like Rocky I, Rocky II is a playmaker, not a workout wizard.
5-151	Jake Schifano	WR	Akron	Another project but ran a 4.39 at combine with a sore hamstring.
6-187	Justin Hartwig	G	Kansas	College tackle (and discus champion) projects as a guard.
7-225	Darrell Hill	WR	Northern Illinois	College teammate of WR Justin McCareins, a Titans '01 draftee.
7-240	Carlos Hall	DE	Arkansas	Undersized speed rusher could fill need for depth at end.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-18	Kenny Holmes	DE	Miami (Fla.)	Starter with Giants
'98-16	Kevin Dyson	WR	Utah	Starter with Titans
'99-16	Jevon Kearse	DE	Florida	Starter with Titans
'00-30	Keith Bulluck	LB	Syracuse	Starter with Titans
'01	None			

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

Eddie George was hurt much of last year, but in the few games when he was healthy, they weren't patient. He'd get 2 yards, 2 yards, 3 yards, then sometimes he'd get 7 or 9. And instead of keeping on pounding him, which is his strength, they took it out of his hands. ... They drafted for their needs, starting with (defensive tackle) **Albert Haynesworth**. If he'll play to his big body, then they won't miss a beat. But he was an immature junior (at Tennessee), and there are some problems they have to rectify. ... Their pass defense was probably one of the worst in the league last year. **Kevin Carter** wasn't the impact player they had hoped for, but you've also got to have somebody in the secondary to slow 'em down. ... They really didn't do



THE TITANS

much on offense to help themselves. They still don't have a back to help if George is hurt again. **Greg Comella** can catch and he can block some, but he's not a blow-you-up lead blocker. He'll try. He'll give you effort. But he's not like **Lorenzo Neal** was when he was there. The receivers didn't stand up like they had hoped for last year, so then it was all on **Steve McNair**. He got hurt early and didn't really start throwing well until midseason. ... Losing (strong safety) **Blaine Bishop** is really going to hurt them. He can line up, hit you and do all the things that you want done. They're gambling on some young guys coming through. They think **Tank Williams** can be an impact safety and **Mike Echols** can soothe the problems they've had at cornerback.

However, he is in the final year of his contract.

Dyson will be pushed for playing time by Justin McCareins, a fourth-round pick in 2001 who missed 12 games because of injury. McCareins is big and fast and can make plays down the field.

With Chris Sanders gone, the Titans are looking for a deep threat or at least a receiver who can draw a defensive back downfield. Drew Bennett, Eddie Berlin and Chris Coleman were on the roster last season, with the 6-5 Bennett having the most success. Berlin made some cameos late in the year, mostly on kickoff returns.

Also in the mix are two draft picks: Akron's Jake Schifino (fifth round) and

Northern Illinois' Darrell Hill (seventh round).

Frank Wycheck, who played in three straight Pro Bowls (1998-2000), and Erron Kinney are a solid pair of tight ends. Shad Meier, a third-round pick in 2001, didn't see much time last season. **GRADE: B**

Line—The Titans will line up without Bruce Matthews this season. That's a daunting thought because this franchise hasn't been without Matthews since the 1982 season.

Not only will Matthews' ability and savvy be missed, but his versatility will be impossible to replace. He was the answer to any problem the Titans had along the offensive line.

Zach Piller probably will get the nod at left guard, one of two spots Matthews played last season (he also played center). The 315-pound Piller is a force in the run game, but he has to be more consistent.

Left tackle Brad Hopkins, right guard Benji Olson and right tackle Fred Miller are pretty well-entrenched in their spots. As a group, the Titans' line had too many penalties in 2001. No lineman—Matthews included—played as well as he had in 2000. The Titans can't afford a similar decline this season.

The team filled a hole at center by signing Jeff Smith, a starter with the Jaguars the last two years but a player they weren't interested in resigning. Smith will be backed up by Gennaro DiNapoli.

Jason Matthews serves as the backup at both tackle spots, and Barry Hall does the same at guard. Everybody in this unit will be under scrutiny and get plenty of action during the preseason.

Fisher wants to smooth out the problems in the running game and believes part of the problem—beyond George's foot—was that the starting line didn't get enough plays in the preseason. Look for that to change.

GRADE: C

DEFENSE Line—This is another unit that will have new faces, particularly at tackle. Josh Evans probably won't be back since he is facing another suspension for violating the league's substance-abuse policy, and free agent Jason Fisk signed with the Chargers.

The Titans used their first-round pick to select defensive tackle Albert Haynesworth. He is only 21 but is an enormously gifted athlete. However, he has not always played up to his potential. If the Titans can get the most out of Haynesworth, they won't miss Fisk.

John Thornton, coming off shoulder surgery, figures to split time with Henry Ford at the other tackle spot. Robaire Smith also will get some spot work inside. If

Joe Salave'a, who had shoulder and ankle surgery after last season, is healthy and ready, the Titans will have depth at tackle.

Beyond getting Haynesworth ready to play, the big project will be to find a way to jump-start left end Carter, a former Pro Bowl selection whose production has tumbled. Carter's transition to the Titans' scheme was difficult, and he finished with just two sacks—both in the same game.

Carter showed flashes of his ability—he had a league-best 17 sacks in 1999 for the Super Bowl champion Rams—but didn't produce the sack numbers. And if Carter can't get it going, Kearsse will continue to face too many double-teams to have much impact. Kearsse had just one of his 10 sacks in the last seven games. **GRADE: B**

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. On the heels of the best season of his career, QB Steve McNair will continue to get better. His shoulder feels great, the offense is asking him to do more, and he is in his prime.
2. Opposing offenses will test the Titans' repaired secondary with three-receiver sets. The team says it fixed the problems, but early games against the Eagles and Raiders will be the test.
3. RB Eddie George will return to form because the team added FB Greg Comella, who can block and do other things in the passing game to take heat off George.
4. The team will design ways to free up DE Kevin Carter and allow him to improve on last year's dismal two-sack total.
5. Keep an eye on DE Jevon Kearse, who is unhappy with a contract that has two years left. He'll need a huge year to get a huge deal.



2001 results

Sept. 9	MIAMI	L	23-31
Sept. 23	at Jacksonville	L	6-13
Sept. 30	Open date		
Oct. 7	at Baltimore	L	7-26
Oct. 14	TAMPA BAY (OT)	W	31-28
Oct. 21	at Detroit	W	27-24
Oct. 29	at Pittsburgh	L	7-34
Nov. 4	JACKSONVILLE	W	28-24
Nov. 12	BALTIMORE	L	10-16
Nov. 18	at Cincinnati	W	20-7
Nov. 25	PITTSBURGH	L	24-34
Dec. 2	at Cleveland	W	31-15
Dec. 9	at Minnesota	L	24-42
Dec. 16	GREEN BAY	W	26-20
Dec. 22	at Oakland	W	13-10
Dec. 30	CLEVELAND	L	38-41
Jan. 6	CINCINNATI	L	21-23

Moves

Key additions

FB Greg Comella	Free agent/Giants
S Lance Schulters	Free agent/49ers
C Jeff Smith	Free agent/Jaguars

Key losses

S Blaine Bishop	Free agent/Eagles
CB Michael Booker	Free agent
DE Josh Evans	Facing NFL suspension
LB Greg Favors	Free agent/Colts
DT Jason Fisk	Free agent/Chargers
CB DeRon Jenkins	Free agent/Panthers
G Bruce Matthews	Retired
LB Eddie Robinson	Free agent/Bills
WR Chris Sanders	Free agent/Browns

Stadium/Media

Adelphia Coliseum (68,804, grass).

Ticket information: 615-341-SNAP.

Training site: 460 Great Circle Road, Nashville, Tenn.; 615-565-4000.

Radio: WGFX-FM (104.5).

Website: www.titansonline.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 7-9 (4th in AFC Central); 3-7 in division; 4-8 in conference; 3-1 vs. NFC; 3-5 at home; 4-4 on road; 1-1 on artificial turf; 6-8 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Jeff Fisher's regular-season record: 65-53 in eight seasons with Titans.

Fisher's postseason record: 3-2 in two appearances with Titans (0-1 in Super Bowl).

Team record last five years: 49-31 (.613, ranks T5th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*334.5	5	8
Rushing offense	*112.1	T8	T12
Passing offense	*222.4	4	T8
Scoring offense	336	7	12
Total defense	*344.7	15	25
Rushing defense	*89.4	3	5
Passing defense	*255.3	16	31
Scoring defense	388	14	25
Takeaways	24	T13	T25
Giveaways	28	T7	T13
Turnover differential	-4	10	20
Sacks	32	15	T23
Sacks allowed	43	11	21

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coch	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Jeff Fisher	Head coach	17	9
Gunther Cunningham	Asst. head coach/LBs	21	2
George Henshaw	Asst. head coach/offense	15	6
Mike Heimerdinger	Offensive coordinator	8	3
Jim Schwartz	Defensive coordinator	7	4
Chuck Cecil	Defensive assistant	2	2
Craig Johnson	Offensive assistant	3	3
Alan Lowry	Special teams	21	7
Mike Munchak	Offensive line	9	9
Sherman Smith	Running backs	8	8
Steve Walters	Wide receivers	20	4
Jim Washburn	Defensive line	4	4
Steve Watterson	Strength & rehabilitation	19	17
Everett Withers	Defensive backs	3	2



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

McNair, the Titans' main offensive weapon last year, deserved Pro Bowl consideration.

Linebackers—This much is certain: Randall Godfrey is the middle linebacker and Keith Bulluck is one of the outside starters. The other starting position and the backup jobs are wide open.

Free agents Eddie Robinson and Greg Favors left for the Bills and Colts, respectively, creating an opening on the outside. The leading candidate for the job is Peter Sirmon, but he could be challenged by rookie Rocky Calmus. The question about Sirmon is whether he can hold up physically with full-time work. He certainly is fast enough and is a sure tackler.

Calmus, a third-round pick, is an instinctive linebacker. He played inside linebacker in college but is a bit light for that role in the NFL. He'll need to prove he can run to the ball well enough to play the outside position.

As if one rookie Rocky wasn't enough, the Titans selected Rocky Boiman in the fourth round. He has pass-rushing skills and could be inserted on third downs and in obvious passing situations. The team also has considered moving Frank Chamberlin, who is Godfrey's backup in the middle, to an outside spot.

The Titans have wanted to get Bulluck on the field for some time. Even when he was stuck behind Favors and Robinson, the Titans knew Bulluck had the potential to be special. He runs well, does the work off the

field and has played in almost every situational role. The Titans couldn't hold him back any longer; he needs to play. The hard-working Godfrey is an anchor in the middle, one of the best in the league. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—The Titans were dismal against the pass last season—last in the league in passing yards allowed—and it influenced every phase of their game, from the pass rush to how the offense operated. So this was the area that got the most attention in the offseason.

At least half of the starting secondary will be different. And by the time camp breaks, cornerback Samari Rolle might be the only 2001 starter in the lineup.

The Titans signed Lance Schulters to play free safety. Schulters, 27, has good size and quickness and is a big-time hitter. He fits the scheme, and though the Titans may have overpaid slightly for his services, they needed him desperately. He will make the calls in the secondary and will bring much-needed consistency to the unit.

Second-round pick Tank Williams is the leading candidate for the strong safety job. He played free safety at Stanford, so he runs well enough to play in space. And at 223 pounds, he is strong enough to support against the run near the line. Aric Morris, who started 10 games at strong safety last season, also is a starting option at strong safety.

Rolle's play dropped off last season because of a neck injury and contract distractions, but he is expected to reclaim his status as one of the top cover corners in the league. Andre Dyson started 12 games as a rookie at cornerback. Though he is atop the depth chart, he faces stiff competition from rookies Mike Echols and Tony Beckham, both fourth-round picks.

Beckham (6-1, 195), though still raw in coverage techniques, is adept at jamming receivers. The Titans would prefer to have a bigger corner, such as Beckham, starting. Dyson (5-10) and Echols (5-10) might fit better in the nickel and dime packages.

That doesn't mean they won't play a lot, because most teams trot out three wide receivers in order to get matchup advantages. **GRADE: C**

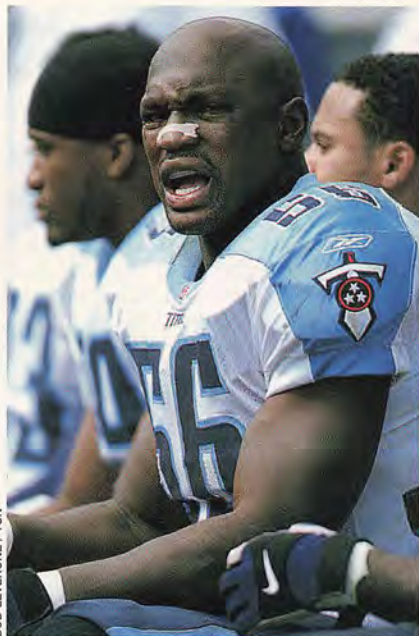
SPECIAL TEAMS The big pieces here—kicker, punter and return specialist—didn't need much attention. Kicker Joe Nedney has a powerful leg. He was erratic at times last season, but he has big-time range, and the Titans are far more inclined to attempt field goals in the 45- to 55-yard range than they were when Al Del Greco was with the team.

Craig Hentrich is one of the best punters in the game. He puts the ball where it needs to be and uses a variety of kicks (including a knuckleball kick) to make things tough on opposing returners.

In the return game, the Titans prefer not to use an offensive regular to return kicks. But they may have to consider that, because

REALIGNMENT reality

The good news is the Titans' 7-9 finish would have won the AFC South had the division existed last season. The Colts and Jaguars had six wins apiece, and the Texans were not yet on the field. But the Titans better not get too confident. With Tony Dungy adding his defensive touch to a Colts team that has plenty of offensive firepower, Indianapolis should be much improved. The Colts had the 29th-ranked defense last season, but Dungy will make it respectable. The Jaguars are familiar with Tennessee from their years together in the former AFC Central. The Jaguars have obvious defensive woes, but like Indianapolis, they can throw the ball. As for the expansion Texans, they have assembled enough offensive talent to make it clear that all three AFC South opponents will attack the Titans' questionable secondary this season.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Godfrey has quietly developed into one of the best middle linebackers in the league.

there is no question Mason is the best kick and punt returner on the team. The solution may be to let Mason return punts and have Berlin or McCareins handle the kickoff returns.

With Matthews gone, the long-snapping chores are up in the air. It was his job for most of the last two decades. If Long is resigned, he can handle it. Miller was the long snapper at minicamp but is unlikely to have that role. **GRADE: B+**

BOTTOM LINE The Titans say they are back. They say they have the talent to get themselves to the front of the line in the AFC. But that won't happen without much-improved play from the secondary. If the Titans have adequately filled the gaps in the defensive backfield—and that's a big if considering they might start two rookies—they will be strong enough in the other areas to be in the postseason hunt.

If not, Tennessee will miss the playoffs again.

TSN

Jeff Legwold covers the Titans for the Tennessean of Nashville.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Kevin Dyson
	■ Justin McCareins
LT	● Brad Hopkins
	■ Jason Mathews
LG	■ Zach Piller
	□ Barry Hall
C	■ Jeff Smith
	□ Genaro DiNapoli
RG	■ Benji Olson
	□ Barry Hall
RT	■ Fred Miller
	■ Jason Mathews
TE	■ Erron Kinney
	□ Shad Meier
WR	● Derrick Mason
	■ Drew Bennett
QB	● Steve McNair
	■ Neil O'Donnell
RB	● Eddie George
	□ Mike Green
FB	■ Greg Comella
	□ Dan Alexander

Defense

LE	■ Kevin Carter
	■ Henry Ford
LT	■ Henry Ford
	■ John Thornton
RT	■ Albert Haynesworth
	■ Robaire Smith
RE	● Jevon Kearse
	■ Henry Ford
LLB	● Keith Bulluck
	□ Rocky Boiman
MLB	● Randall Godfrey
	■ Frank Chamberlin
RLB	■ Peter Sirmon
	■ Rocky Calmus
LCB	■ Andre Dyson
	■ Tony Beckham
RCB	● Samari Rolle
	■ Mike Echols
SS	■ Tank Williams
	□ Aric Morris
FS	● Lance Schulters
	■ Bobby Myers

Specialists

K	● Joe Nedney
P	● Craig Hentrich
KR	■ Justin McCareins
PR	● Derrick Mason
LS	□ Fred Miller
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

TITANS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
9	McNair, Steve	6-2/225	2-14-73	8	Alcorn State	D1/95	15/15
14	O'Donnell, Neil	6-3/228	7-3-66	13	Maryland	UFA/99	5/1
	Volek, Billy	6-2/214	4-28-76	3	Fresno State	FA/00	1/0
Running backs							
38	Alexander, Dan (FB)	6-0/252	3-17-78	2	Nebraska	D6/01	7/0
33	Comella, Greg (FB)	6-1/248	7-29-75	5	Stanford	UFA/02	16/13
27	George, Eddie	6-3/240	9-24-73	7	Ohio State	D1/96	16/16
20	Green, Mike	6-0/249	9-2-76	3	Houston	D7a/00	16/1
Receivers							
83	Bennett, Drew	6-5/203	8-26-78	2	UCLA	FA/01	14/1
82	Berlin, Eddie	5-11/194	1-14-78	2	Northern Iowa	D5/01	11/0
80	Coleman, Chris	6-0/202	5-8-77	3	North Carolina State	FA/00	16/0
87	Dyson, Kevin	6-1/201	6-23-75	5	Utah	D1/98	16/16
19	Hill, Darrell	6-3/197	6-19-79	R	Northern Illinois	D7a/02	—
88	Kinney, Erron (TE)	6-5/280	7-28-77	3	Florida	D3a/00	13/12
85	Mason, Derrick	5-10/188	1-17-74	6	Michigan State	D4a/97	15/15
86	McCareins, Justin	6-2/205	12-11-78	2	Northern Illinois	D4/01	4/1
84	Meier, Shad (TE)	6-4/253	6-7-78	2	Kansas State	D3/01	11/1
48	Natkin, Brian (TE)	6-2/250	1-3-78	1	Texas-El Paso	FA/01	3/0
81	Schifano, Jake	6-1/200	11-15-79	R	Akron	D5/02	—
89	Wycheck, Frank (TE)	6-3/250	10-14-71	10	Maryland	W-Was/95	16/16
Offensive linemen							
64	DiNapoli, Genaro (C)	6-3/295	5-25-75	5	Virginia Tech	T-Oak/00	5/2
70	Haayer, Adam (T)	6-6/301	2-22-77	2	Minnesota	D6b/01	—
	Hall, Barry (T)	6-6/311	11-23-77	2	Middle Tenn. State	FA/01	0/0
77	Hartwig, Justin (G)	6-4/300	11-21-78	R	Kansas	D6/02	—
72	Hopkins, Brad (T)	6-3/305	9-5-70	10	Illinois	D1/93	14/14
76	Mathews, Jason (T)	6-5/304	2-9-71	9	Texas A&M	FA/98	16/2
71	Miller, Fred (T)	6-7/315	2-6-73	7	Baylor	UFA/00	16/16
75	Olson, Benji (G)	6-3/315	6-5-75	5	Washington	D5/98	16/16
69	Piller, Zach (G)	6-5/315	5-2-76	4	Florida	D3/99	14/9
	Smith, Jeff (C)	6-3/316	5-25-73	7	Tennessee	FA/02	16/16
Defensive linemen							
93	Carter, Kevin (E)	6-5/280	9-21-73	8	Florida	T-SIL/01	16/16
92	Ford, Henry (T)	6-3/295	10-30-71	9	Arkansas	D1/94	16/0
97	Hall, Carlos (E)	6-4/259	1-16-79	R	Arkansas	D7b/02	—
91	Haynesworth, Albert (T)	6-6/320	6-17-81	R	Tennessee	D1/02	—
90	Kearse, Jevon (E)	6-4/265	9-3-76	4	Florida	D1/99	16/16
99	Kocurek, Kris (T)	6-4/293	11-15-78	1	Texas Tech	D7c/01	1/0
95	Salave'a, Joe (T)	6-3/295	3-23-75	5	Arizona	D4/98	11/0
98	Smith, Robaire (E)	6-4/280	11-15-77	3	Michigan State	D6/00	10/0
94	Thomas, Juqua (E)	6-2/252	5-15-78	2	Oklahoma State	FA/01	7/0
78	Thornton, John (T)	6-2/300	10-2-76	4	West Virginia	D2/99	3/0
Linebackers							
50	Boiman, Rocky	6-4/242	1-24-80	R	Notre Dame	D4c/02	—
53	Bulluck, Keith	6-3/232	4-4-77	3	Syracuse	D1/00	15/2
54	Calmus, Rocky	6-3/243	8-1-79	R	Oklahoma	D3/02	—
57	Chamberlin, Frank	6-1/246	1-2-78	3	Boston College	D5b/00	16/0
56	Godfrey, Randall	6-2/245	4-6-73	7	Georgia	UFA/00	14/14
59	Sirmon, Peter	6-2/246	2-18-77	3	Oregon	D4b/00	16/0
58	Thweatt, Byron	6-2/233	3-21-77	2	Virginia	FA/01	5/0
Defensive backs							
24	Beckham, Tony (CB)	6-1/195	10-1-78	R	Wisconsin-Stout	D4b/02	—
22	Dyson, Andre (CB)	5-10/187	5-25-79	2	Utah	D2/01	14/11
36	Echols, Mike (CB)	5-10/190	10-13-78	R	Wisconsin	D4a/02	—
	George, Tony (S)	5-11/206	8-10-75	3	Florida	FA/02	0/0
30	Mitchell, Donald (CB)	5-9/185	12-14-76	4	Southern Methodist	D4b/99	13/4
28	Morris, Aric (S)	5-10/212	7-22-77	3	Michigan State	D5a/00	16/10
32	Myers, Bobby (S)	6-1/191	11-10-76	3	Wisconsin	D4a/00	1/1
21	Rolle, Samari (CB)	6-0/175	8-10-76	5	Florida State	D2/98	14/13
31	Schulters, Lance (S)	6-2/207	5-27-75	5	Hofstra	UFA/02	16/16
37	Sidney, Dainon (CB)	6-0/188	5-30-75	5	Alabama-Birmingham	D3/98	1/0
29	Walker, Joe (S)	5-10/204	3-19-77	2	Nebraska	FA/01	16/3
25	Williams, Tank (S)	6-3/223	6-30-80	R	Stanford	D2/02	—
Specialists							
15	Hentrich, Craig (P)	6-3/198	5-18-71	9	Notre Dame	UFA/98	16/0
6	Nedney, Joe (K)	6-5/220	3-22-73	7	San Jose State	UFA/01	16/0

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Broncos



Smith (113 catches) was a one-man show among Denver's wideouts last year.

By PATRICK SAUNDERS

The 2001 season was an odyssey of the worst kind. Key injuries, quarterback Brian Griese's meltdown, a clear lack of leadership and a sputtering offense contributed to an 8-8 record. When the team closed the season with a 29-10 loss at Indianapolis—with Griese throwing four interceptions and rumors swirling that coach Mike Shanahan was headed to the University of Florida—the Broncos looked about as far away from the Super Bowl as the Bengals.

But the always-confident Broncos don't see it that way. Indeed "rebuilding" is a dirty word in Denver. The Broncos consider 2001 a fluke. That tells you something about this organization, one that annually sets its sights on the Super Bowl.

2002 schedule All times Eastern

Sept. 8	ST. LOUIS	4:15	Nov. 11	OAK. (Mon.)	9:00
Sept. 15	at San Fran.	4:15	Nov. 17	at Seattle	4:15
Sept. 22	BUFFALO	4:05	Nov. 24	INDIANAPOLIS	8:30
Sept. 30	at Balt. (Mon.)	9:00	Dec. 1	at San Diego	4:05
Oct. 6	SAN DIEGO	4:05	Dec. 8	at N.Y. Jets	4:15
Oct. 13	MIAMI	8:30	Dec. 15	KANSAS CITY	4:05
Oct. 20	at Kansas City	1:00	Dec. 22	at Oakland	4:15
Oct. 27	at New Eng.	4:15	Dec. 29	ARIZONA	4:15
Nov. 3	Open date		Strength of schedule: T 7th		

There is reason for optimism. The offense, which ranked 22nd last year, has talent to match up with anyone, save the Rams. The return of loquacious tight end Shannon Sharpe could be huge. Even in his 13th year, he still can get open and make big plays on third down or in the end zone. More important, he'll put life back in what has been a lifeless locker room.

Wide receiver Ed McCaffrey, who was carted off the field with a broken leg in the 2001 season opener, should be as good as new. McCaffrey, who turns 34 before the season, still is a force, as is his running mate, Pro Bowler Rod Smith.

And if running back Terrell Davis can stay healthy and Griese can return to his Pro Bowl form of 2000, the offense can be dynamic again. Of course, those are a couple of huge ifs. Davis played in a total of 17 games over the last three seasons, and Griese's play dropped off drastically last season. His quarterback rating fell from 102.9 to 78.5, and his interception total rose from four to 19, and he was the league's worst fourth-quarter quarterback. Moreover, Griese blamed his team's woes on a lack of offensive talent. That didn't sit well with some of his teammates, nor with Shanahan.

Now, all is forgiven. But not forgotten. And that's a good thing, because the bitter lessons of 2001 should make Denver a better team in 2002.

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

Injuries the last couple of years at running back and quarterback have made the road difficult. The loss of **Ed McCaffrey** was too much to overcome last season. But never count the Broncos out as long as **Mike Shanahan** is head coach and calling the shots in personnel. ... **Brian Griese** is overrated. He's good when complemented with a full boat of good players. But he is inconsistent in his decision-making and ability to throw the long ball. He does not display the ability to carry the load and make the big play when it's needed. ... I like all of their receivers. McCaffrey has outstanding hands and is a clutch performer who does a lot of the dirty work. **Rod Smith** is one of the best. I believe **Kevin Kasper** is ready to break out. **Ashley Lelie**, their



THE BRONCOS

No. 1 pick, will add a vertical threat that teams will have to honor. And he will open up the underneath routes for the old veterans. ... **Ian Gold** is a fast, tough, physical-attacking style linebacker who made his name on special teams and brought that temperament to his position play. He's a little undersized, but he got a lot of action at linebacker last year and proved he can play. ... The offensive line is not a strong point and could cause the offense to bog down if it doesn't perform. ... The Broncos made some solid moves. The return of **Shannon Sharpe** at tight end will help—for the short term. The offensive line and healthy running backs and receivers are the keys to their success. And Griese must be solid and consistent.

COACHING Strategies—When it comes to offensive game-planning, few can match Shanahan and coordinator Gary Kubiak. However, they stumbled last year. When injuries to McCaffrey, Davis and others stalled the offense, they were unable to jump-start it. Young receivers Chris Cole and Scottie Montgomery frequently ran the wrong routes and that frustrated Griese. Denver's renowned running game faltered, too.

The addition of Sharpe and the return of McCaffrey should spark things. Sharpe, in particular, creates matchup problems. Shanahan will love having him back.

The defense is in excellent hands. Last

year, Ray Rhodes came in and simplified things, freeing players to use their skills. The one problem was the lack of a consistent pass rush, which forced Rhodes to use zone blitzes more than he likes. If Denver can create a better pass rush from its front four, the defense will be even better than last year's ninth-ranked unit.

Style—Despite a 25-23 regular-season record and an 0-1 postseason mark over the last three seasons, Shanahan remains one of the league's most respected coaches. He lets his players know exactly what he expects, and he gets respect in return. Just consider the great success of Denver's off-season workout program, one that attracts more than 40 players four days a week. Denver might not have the league's best talent, but it certainly boasts one of the classiest organizations.

A major concern a year ago was the loss of Alex Gibbs as the full-time offensive line coach. Gibbs stayed on to assist new offensive line coach Rick Dennison on a part-time basis and is expected to have a similar role this year. Although there is no way to replace Gibbs' ability to teach and motivate, Dennison is finding his niche and developing his style. Dennison expects his players to be self-motivated, and so far they have been. **GRADE: B+**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—If you give Griese a creative game plan, reliable receivers and a solid running game, he is one of the league's best quarterbacks. A lot has been made about his supposed lack of arm strength, but that's a bum rap. He's never going to be John Elway, but he can make the needed throws. It is true, however, that he needs to throw the ball downfield more.

The big question pertains to his leadership, or lack thereof. Last year, when things got bad, so did Griese. He was awful in the

fourth quarter and never looked like a quarterback who could bring his team back from the brink. He's vowed he'll be the stand-up guy the team can lean on, especially in tough times. We'll see.

If Griese goes down, the likely replacement will be Steve Beuerlein, 37. He's sharp and talented, but his fragile right elbow is a real worry. No one, not even Beuerlein, knows how it will react if he must start. Third-year quarterback Jarious Jackson simply has not had enough playing time to be counted on to carry the team in an emergency. **GRADE: B-**

Running backs—

Davis is confident he's on the verge of a major comeback. But just when it seemed like he would survive the offseason unscathed, he had arthroscopic knee surgery in May for the second time in six months. The team is counting on Davis to get the offense moving again.

The Broncos finished 10th in the NFL in rushing last year, which isn't good enough for them. Part of the problem was inconsistent line play. Part of it was the inconsistency of Davis, Mike Anderson and Olandis Gary. To provide insurance in case Davis battles injuries again, Clinton Portis was drafted in the second round. Portis may lack between-the-tackles bulk, but he has an excellent burst and is a legitimate break-away threat.

Anderson is moving to fullback, where he will catch a few passes and carry the ball a little more than most NFL fullbacks do. Given Anderson's dedication, he'll be the

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. **Brian Griese** will recover from last year's disaster and be one of the AFC's top quarterbacks. Surround Griese with talent in a good system and he is an efficient, albeit unimaginative, player.
2. **TE Shannon Sharpe** won't catch as many balls as he did in Baltimore last year, but he'll become Griese's third-down and goal-line target. A fine homecoming.
3. Denver's defense will continue to improve, but it won't be an elite unit, largely because of a mediocre outside pass rush and the lack of a star in the secondary.
4. In his latest comeback, **RB Terrell Davis** will produce quality yards, but nothing approaching his 2,008-yard 1998 season. A solid 1,200 yards sounds about right.
5. **OLB Ian Gold** will emerge as a stand-out. He's undersized, but he has speed, smarts and tenacity.



2001 results

Sept. 10	N.Y. GIANTS	W	31-20
Sept. 23	at Arizona	W	38-17
Sept. 30	BALTIMORE	L	13-20
Oct. 7	KANSAS CITY	W	20-6
Oct. 14	at Seattle	L	21-34
Oct. 21	at San Diego	L	10-27
Oct. 28	NEW ENGLAND	W	31-20
Nov. 5	at Oakland	L	28-38
Nov. 11	SAN DIEGO	W	26-16
Nov. 18	WASHINGTON	L	10-17
Nov. 22	at Dallas	W	26-24
Dec. 2	at Miami	L	10-21
Dec. 9	SEATTLE	W	20-7
Dec. 16	at Kan. City (OT)	L	23-26
Dec. 23	Open date		
Dec. 30	OAKLAND	W	23-17
Jan. 6	at Indianapolis	L	10-29

Griese has vowed he'll be the standup guy the Broncos can lean on.



CLIFF GRASSMICK FOR TSN

blocking back Denver has needed since it lost Howard Griffith to a neck injury in training camp last summer.

If Davis can approach his old form and turn in a 1,200-yard season, the Broncos should be playoff bound. **GRADE: B**

Receivers—This unit should go from famine to feast. McCaffrey is old for a receiver and is coming back from a broken leg, but he's still one of the best all-around wideouts in the game. He runs great routes and blocks like a fullback. Same goes for Smith, who set a franchise record with 113 receptions last year, best in the NFL. Sharpe's sticky fingers will bail Griese out of a lot of jams.

Behind the Big Three, there actually is some depth. Last season, there was none. Take away Smith's 113 catches, and the other six wide receivers combined for 54. The player to watch is Kevin Kasper, a second-year player. He's a workout fanatic who rivals Bill Romanowski in that department. Kasper has great hands and excellent speed. He has increased his upper-body strength and is committed to improving his game. If Kasper improves his route running and gains Griese's trust, he will be a major player.

There is a big question as to whether former Cardinal Rob Moore, 33, still has something to give after missing two seasons because of injury problems. There also is a question of whether first-round draft choice Ashley Lelie is ready to make an impact. He has great speed and tremendous potential but is thin and a little raw. But Lelie made a good impression at the first minicamp and will compete against Kasper for the third receiver job. At the very least, he should be able to stretch defenses as the fourth receiver.

Youngsters Montgomery and Cole also have shown talent flashes, but it's doubtful both will make the final roster.

Behind Sharpe is Desmond Clark, who has the potential to be the next

Sharpe, and veteran Dwayne Carswell, the best blocker of the bunch. The trio gives Denver the deepest tight end corps in the league.

If Denver's passing game isn't near the top this season, it will be a major disappointment and the finger will be pointed at Griese. **GRADE: A**

Line—During Denver's Super Bowl title runs in 1997 and '98, the offensive line was the best in the league. Relatively light, very athletic and perfectly coordinated, it was a joy to watch. But times have changed. Last year, the league cracked down on some of the Broncos' questionable blocking tactics, and though they claim it didn't have a chilling effect, it certainly appeared to.

It's also a matter of personnel. For the second straight offseason, the team enters training camp searching for a starting left tackle. Matt Lepsis, the light-footed right tackle, wants the job. He'll likely get it, and though there will be some growing pains, he could be a fixture there for years. Former Falcon Ephraim Salaam, a solid player, likely will be the starter on the right side.

There are no worries at center or right guard, with Tom Nalen and Dan Neil, respectively. Not true at left guard. By now, Lennie Friedman was supposed to be entrenched there. But he was a disappointment last season and actually lost his starting job to Steve Herndon for a short time. It's a good bet Friedman, a smart, intense player, will bounce back this season.

No matter what happens with the starters, depth still will be a problem. If a starter goes down, there could be trouble. **GRADE: B-**

DEFENSE Line—Every team wants a powerhouse end—someone who can disrupt the opponent's game plan and wreak havoc. Denver couldn't afford one in free agency and drafted too late to obtain one. So it smartly moved three-time Pro Bowl tackle Trevor Pryce to the outside. At 6-5, he has the height, as well as the agility, to make it work. For Pryce, the bonus is not being constantly double-teamed and beat up, which is what can happen inside. If he applies himself, Pryce can be a star outside.

Pryce likely will play on the left side. There are questions on the right side. Kavika Pittman never has been the force the team hoped he would be. In fact, even after taking a major pay cut, there's a chance he won't make the team. Second-year ends Reggie

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-19	Ashley Lelie	WR	Hawaii	Speed and game-breaking ability could earn him No. 3 WR spot.
2-51	Clinton Portis	RB	Miami (Fla.)	Smaller than typical Denver RB but faster, too. And a good receiver.
3-96	Dorsett Davis	DT	Mississippi State	Essentially a hit-or-miss prospect; has rep as an underachiever.
4-131	Sam Brandon	DB	UNLV	Won't start right away, if ever, but could be special teams force.
5-144	Herb Haygood	WR	Michigan State	Could make team as fourth or fifth WR—or as a kick returner.
6-191	Jeb Putzier	TE	Boise State	Broncos are loaded at TE, so special teams will be his first job.
7-228	Chris Young	DB	Georgia Tech	Has decent size and hits a ton; could be a diamond in the rough.
7-231	Monsanto Pope	DT	Virginia	Strictly a pick to provide depth and competition in camp.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-28	Trevor Pryce	DT	Clemson	Starter with Broncos
'98-30	Marcus Nash	WR	Tennessee	In the CFL
'99-31	Al Wilson	LB	Tennessee	Starter with Broncos
'00-15	Deltha O'Neal	CB	California	Starter with Broncos
'01-24	Willie Middlebrooks	CB	Minnesota	Starter with Broncos

Hayward and Paul Toviessi have a lot of potential but both need to improve against the run. Toviessi missed his rookie season with a knee injury, but the coaches think he can be an effective pass rusher. Ends Keith Washington and Bert Berry provide decent depth.

By signing former Raven Lionel Dalton and pairing him with the massive Chester McGlockton, the team has nearly 700 pounds of beef in the interior line. The Broncos are excited about third-round pick Dorsett Davis, a 6-5, 304-pound project from Mississippi State.

The Broncos ranked sixth in the NFL



CLIFF GRASSMICK FOR TSN

Denver couldn't land a powerhouse end in free agency or the draft, so it moved Pryce outside.

against the run last year, and a lot of that had to do with the front four. The unit should be even better. But to be a truly dominant unit, the front four must produce more sacks. The team had 39 sacks last year, but only 21 came from defensive linemen.

GRADE: B+

Linebackers—For the first time since 1996, Romanowski won't be wearing blue and orange when he smashes running backs and roughs up quarterbacks. He's a Raider now, and the Broncos lost some of their nastiness as well as their best pure tackler.

Replacing him at the strongside position is veteran John Mobley, who moves over from the weak side, where he had been a starter since his rookie season (1996). The move means less free-lancing for Mobley, who usually leads the team in tackles. Mobley is solid but never has reached his full potential. In his new spot, he'll be asked to cover tight ends downfield, something he will do better than Romanowski, who often was a step or two behind the likes of Tony Gonzalez.

Third-year player Ian Gold fills Mobley's spot on the weak side. Gold is fast, athletic

and smart but struggles to keep his weight above 220 pounds. He will excel at chasing down running backs sideline to sideline, blitzing and covering receivers out of the backfield. He'll have trouble fighting off charging linemen and fullbacks. That's why the Broncos decided to play Gold off the ball and move Mobley to the tight end side.

In the middle, Al Wilson is getting better every season. He no longer goes for the big hit on every tackle, having learned to wrap up and be more sound in his tackling fundamentals. With Romanowski gone, Wilson also will be the defensive signal-caller and leader.

For depth on the outside, Denver signed former 49er Terry Killens and is counting on Jashon Sykes, a rookie who wasn't drafted because of a serious neck injury. Keith Burns, a special teams standout who lacks the speed to be a long-term starter, backs up Wilson in the middle. **GRADE: B+**

Secondary—This is the missing piece in the defensive puzzle. If the Broncos develop a hard-hitting free safety with decent cover skills, they will be OK. If they can't, the secondary will be suspect. The hole was created when Eric Brown left as a free agent. He was a big hitter, but he drove his coaches and teammates crazy with his mental mistakes and blown assignments. Former Cowboy Izell Reese could be the solution. Willie Middlebrooks, last year's first-round draft choice, might be converted from cornerback to safety. But his nagging leg injury must heal first.

Strong safety Kenoy Kennedy is not a flashy player, but he's a solid tackler and doesn't make many mistakes.

The cornerbacks—Denard Walker on the left side and Deltha O'Neal on the right—should be good or better. O'Neal, by virtue of his nine interceptions, made the Pro Bowl. In truth, Walker is the better player, but teams threw toward O'Neal more, hence the interceptions. That said, O'Neal, who is entering his third season, has a chance to be a standout. He is a natural ballhawk, and he's becoming a better tackler. O'Neal has trouble at times in man-to-man coverage, especially against experienced receivers such as Oakland's Tim Brown. Experience should help straighten O'Neal out.

In cornerback Jimmy Spencer and safety George Coghill, there is adequate depth. Two rookie safeties—Sam Brandon and Chris Young—could make the squad.

GRADE: B-

SPECIAL TEAMS Shanahan expects precision and passion from his special teams players, and it shows. Although there have been occasional breakdowns, the team's special teams rank among the league's elite.

Kicker Jason Elam is coming off the best season of his career (31-of-36 on field-goal attempts), and few are better in the clutch. His weakness is relatively short kickoffs. Punter Tom Rouen bounced back from an

Moves

Key additions

OT Barrett Brooks	Free agent
DT Lionel Dalton	Free agent/Ravens
RB Reuben Droughns	Free agent/Lions
LB Terry Killens	Free agent/49ers
WR Rob Moore	Free agent/Cardinals
S Izell Reese	Free agent/Cowboys
OT Ephraim Salaam	Free agent/Falcons
TE Shannon Sharpe	Free agent/Ravens

Key losses

CB Eric Brown	Free agent
QB Gus Frerotte	Free agent/Bengals
FB Howard Griffith	Retired
DT Leon Lett	Free agent
LB Bill Romanowski	Free agent/Raiders
FB Detron Smith	Free agent/Jaguars
OT Trey Teague	Free agent/Bills

Stadium/Media

Invesco Field at Mile High (76,125, grass).

Ticket information: 720-258-3333.

Training site: University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colo.; 303-623-5212.

Radio: KOA-AM (850).

Website: www.denverbroncos.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 8-8 (3rd in AFC West); 4-4 in division; 5-7 in conference; 3-1 vs. NFC; 6-2 at home; 2-6 on road; 1-2 on artificial turf; 7-6 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Mike Shanahan's regular-season record: 72-40 in seven seasons with Broncos; 80-52 overall in nine seasons with Broncos and Raiders.

Shanahan's postseason record: 7-2 in three appearances with Broncos (2-0 in Super Bowls).

Team record last five years: 51-29 (.638, ranks 2nd in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 2000.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*301.1	12	22
Rushing offense	*117.3	6	10
Passing offense	*183.8	13	25
Scoring offense	340	6	10
Total defense	*298.4	4	8
Rushing defense	*93.3	4	6
Passing defense	*205.1	10	16
Scoring defense	339	12	21
Takeaways	37	3	T5
Giveaways	27	T5	T9
Turnover differential	10	2	6
Sacks	39	10	17
Sacks allowed	42	10	20

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coch	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Mike Shanahan	Head coach	19	8
Alex Gibbs	Asst. HC/Offensive line	19	8
Gary Kubiak	Off. coord./quarterbacks	9	8
Ray Rhodes	Defensive coordinator	22	2
Jacob Burney	Defensive line	9	1
Frank Bush	Special teams	11	8
Larry Coyer	Linebackers	4	3
Rick Dennison	Offensive line	8	8
Karl Dorrell	Wide receivers	3	3
George Dyer	Asst. to head coach	21	8
David Gibbs	Secondary	2	2
Anthony Lynn	Special teams asst.	2	2
Pat McPherson	Offensive assistant	5	5
Keith Millard	Asst. DL/pass rush specialist	1	1
Ron Milus	Nickel backs	3	3
Brian Pariani	Tight ends	13	8
Greg Saporta	Asst. strength & cond.	8	8
Cedric Smith	Asst. strength & cond.	2	2
Bobby Turner	Running backs	8	8
Rich Tuten	Strength & conditioning	8	8
Steve Watson	Defensive assistant	2	2

REALIGNMENT reality

The league's new format left the Broncos largely unaffected, as they still must face their two biggest rivals—the Raiders and Chiefs—twice a season. San Diego, a team Denver holds a 9-5 advantage over during the Mike Shanahan era, should provide two wins for Denver. The Broncos will miss Seattle, which moved to the NFC West, because they have won 10 of their last 12 meetings with the Seahawks. Although much was made of the Shanahan-Mike Holmgren rivalry when Holmgren took over the Seahawks in 1999, Denver continued to dominate, winning four of six, though the Seahawks won, 34-21, in Seattle last season. The breaking off of the series actually will have to wait one more year because the teams meet in Seattle during rainy November. The Broncos must beat the Raiders to win the AFC West—and they know it. Those teams split their two meetings in 2001.



ROBERT SEALE/TSN

For the first time since 1999, Davis spent the offseason getting in shape instead of rehabbing.

awful 2000 season and did a good job last year. He has a powerful leg, but he needs better touch inside the 20-yard line.

The return game could be explosive. With O'Neal returning punts and Kasper kickoffs, field position shouldn't be a problem. O'Neal has quit dancing so much and is turning up the field with the ball. Kasper's ability to accelerate and hit the hole hard make him a natural returner. Before his ankle injury last year, he was the leading return man in the AFC. **GRADE: A**

BOTTOM LINE With no clear favorite in the AFC, the Broncos can't be ruled out as a possible Super Bowl team. After a run of bad luck, perhaps the injury bug won't infect them again. But after the team washed out last season, just making the playoffs is a more realistic goal.

If the Broncos want to bring magic back to the Mile High City, a few key players must come through. Specifically, Griese must play like the 2000 version. Sharpe must be productive for another year. McCaffrey must be at 100 percent. Davis must stay healthy. And Gold must glitter.

TSN

Patrick Saunders covers the Broncos for the Denver Post.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Rod Smith
	■ Ashley Lelie
LT	■ Matt Lepsis
	□ Barrett Brooks
LG	■ Lennie Friedman
	■ Steve Herndon
C	● Tom Nalen
	■ Ben Hamilton
RG	● Dan Neil
	□ Michael Moore
RT	■ Ephraim Salaam
	□ Cooper Carlisle
TE	■ Shannon Sharpe
	■ Desmond Clark
WR	● Ed McCaffrey
	■ Kevin Kasper
QB	■ Brian Griese
	■ Steve Buehrlein
RB	■ Terrell Davis
	■ Clinton Portis
FB	■ Mike Anderson
	■ Tony Carter

Defense

LE	● Trevor Pryce
	■ Keith Washington
LT	■ Chester McGlockton
	□ Dorsett Davis
RT	■ Lionel Dalton
	□ Montae Reagor
RE	■ Reggie Hayward
	□ Paul Toviessi
WLB	■ Ian Gold
	■ Terry Killens
MLB	■ Al Wilson
	□ Keith Burns
SLB	● John Mobley
	■ Jashon Sykes
LCB	■ Denard Walker
	■ Jimmy Spencer
RCB	● Deltha O'Neal
	□ Willie Middlebrooks
SS	■ Kenoy Kennedy
	□ Delvin Hughley
FS	■ Izell Reese
	■ George Coghill

Specialists

K	● Jason Elam
P	■ Tom Rouen
KR	● Kevin Kasper
PR	● Deltha O'Neal
LS	● David Diaz-Infante
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

BRONCOS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
11	Beuerlein, Steve	6-3/220	3-7-65	16	Notre Dame	FA/01	0/0
14	Griese, Brian	6-3/215	3-18-75	5	Michigan	D3/98	15/15
17	Jackson, Jarious	6-0/228	5-3-77	3	Notre Dame	D7a/00	1/0

Running backs							
38	Anderson, Mike	6-0/230	9-21-73	3	Utah	D6/00	16/7
37	Carter, Tony (FB)	6-0/235	8-23-72	9	Minnesota	UFA/01	16/6
21	Coleman, KaRon	5-7/198	5-22-78	3	Stephen F. Austin St.	FA/00	4/0
30	Davis, Terrell	5-11/210	10-28-72	8	Georgia	D6b/95	8/8
34	Droughns, Reuben	5-11/207	8-21-78	3	Oregon	FA/02	9/3
22	Gary, Olandis	5-11/218	5-18-75	4	Georgia	D4/99	9/1
86	Hape, Patrick (FB)	6-4/262	6-6-74	6	Alabama	UFA/01	15/8
26	Portis, Clinton	5-11/204	9-1-81	R	Miami (Fla.)	D2/02	—

Receivers							
89	Carswell, Dwayne (TE)	6-3/260	1-18-72	9	Liberty (Va.)	FA/94	16/16
88	Clark, Desmond (TE)	6-3/255	4-20-77	4	Wake Forest	D6a/99	16/4
81	Cole, Chris	6-0/195	11-12-77	3	Texas A&M	D3/00	16/1
49	Dominguez, Matt (TE)	6-2/219	6-27-78	2	Sam Houston State	FA/01	12/0
13	Haygood, Herb	5-11/193	12-29-77	R	Michigan State	D5/02	—
82	Kasper, Kevin	6-0/193	12-23-77	2	Iowa	D6/01	10/5
10	Lelie, Ashley	6-3/200	2-16-80	R	Hawaii	D1/02	—
87	McCaffrey, Ed	6-5/215	8-17-68	12	Stanford	UFA/95	1/1
85	McGeoghan, Phil	6-2/224	7-8-79	2	Maine	FA/01	1/0
83	Montgomery, Scottie	6-1/195	5-26-78	3	Duke	FA/00	8/0
15	Moore, Rob	6-3/204	9-27-68	13	Syracuse	FA/02	—
46	Putzier, Jeb (TE)	6-4/256	1-20-79	R	Boise State	D6/02	—
84	Sharpe, Shannon (TE)	6-2/230	6-26-68	13	Savannah (Ga.) State	FA/02	16/15
80	Smith, Rod	6-0/200	5-15-70	8	Missouri Southern	FA/94	15/14

Offensive linemen							
65	Carlisle, Cooper (T)	6-5/295	8-11-77	3	Florida	D4b/00	16/0
64	Friedman, Lennie (G)	6-3/285	10-13-76	4	Duke	D2b/99	15/14
79	Herndon, Steve (G)	6-4/305	5-25-77	2	Georgia	FA/01	5/3
78	Lepsis, Matt (T)	6-4/290	1-13-74	6	Colorado	FA/97	16/16
66	Nalen, Tom (C)	6-3/286	5-13-71	9	Boston College	D7c/94	16/16
62	Neil, Dan (G)	6-2/285	10-21-73	6	Texas	D3/97	15/15
74	Salaam, Ephraim (T)	6-7/300	6-19-76	5	San Diego State	UFA/02	14/13

Defensive linemen							
92	Berry, Bert (E)	6-3/250	8-15-75	5	Notre Dame	FA/00	14/0
94	Dalton, Lionel (T)	6-1/309	2-21-75	5	Eastern Michigan	UFA/02	16/3
96	Davis, Dorsett (T)	6-5/304	1-24-79	R	Mississippi State	D3/02	—
98	Hayward, Reggie (E)	6-5/255	3-14-79	2	Iowa State	D3/01	6/2
90	Johnson, Jerry (T)	6-0/290	7-11-77	3	Florida State	D4a/00	8/0
91	McGlockton, Chester (T)	6-4/334	9-16-69	11	Clemson	FA/01	16/16
95	Pittman, Kavika (E)	6-6/273	10-9-74	7	McNeese State	UFA/00	14/14
75	Pope, Monsanto (T)	6-3/300	1-27-78	R	Virginia	D7b/02	—
93	Pryce, Trevor (T)	6-5/295	8-3-75	6	Clemson	D1/97	16/16
99	Reagor, Montae (E)	6-3/285	6-29-77	4	Texas Tech	D2a/99	8/0
97	Washington, Keith (E)	6-4/275	12-18-72	8	UNLV	FA/01	16/16

Linebackers							
55	Burns, Keith	6-2/235	5-16-72	9	Oklahoma State	FA/00	16/0
52	Gold, Ian	6-0/223	8-23-78	3	Michigan	D2a/00	16/0
58	Killens, Terry	6-1/235	3-24-74	7	Penn State	FA/01	16/2
51	Mobley, John	6-1/236	10-10-73	7	Kutztown (Pa.)	D1/96	16/16
56	Wilson, Al	6-0/240	6-21-77	4	Tennessee	D1/99	16/16

Defensive backs							
42	Brandon, Sam (S)	6-2/200	7-5-79	R	UNLV	D4/02	—
47	Clark, Darius (S)	5-10/210	4-13-77	3	Duke	FA/00	7/0
48	Coghill, George (S)	6-0/210	3-30-70	6	Wake Forest	FA/97	16/0
28	Kennedy, Kenoy (S)	6-1/215	11-15-77	3	Arkansas	D2b/00	16/16
23	Middlebrooks, Willie (CB)	6-1/200	2-12-79	2	Minnesota	D1/01	8/0
24	O'Neal, Deltha (CB)	5-10/196	1-30-77	3	California	D1/00	16/16
43	Reese, Izell (S)	6-2/190	5-7-74	5	Alabama-Birmingham	UFA/02	16/4
33	Spencer, Jimmy (CB)	5-9/188	3-29-69	11	Florida	FA/00	16/1
25	Walker, Denard (CB)	6-1/190	8-9-73	6	Louisiana State	UFA/01	16/15
36	Young, Chris (S)	5-11/210	1-23-80	R	Georgia Tech	D7a/02	—

Specialists							
1	Elam, Jason (K)	5-11/200	3-8-70	10	Hawaii	D3b/93	16/0
16	Rouen, Tom (P)	6-3/225	6-9-68	10	Colorado	FA/93	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: OT Barrett Brooks, DT Cyron Brown, C Ben Hamilton, S Delvin Hughley, G Jay Humphrey, QB Todd Husak, DT Garrett Johnson, G Michael Moore, LB Jashon Sykes, DE Paul Toviessi, OT Brandon Winey.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Chiefs



Despite being the focus of opponents' coverage last season, Gonzalez still caught 73 passes.

PETER NEWCOMB FOR TSN

BY ADAM TEICHER

The reunion between G.M. Carl Peterson and coach Dick Vermeil may not have brought great results in the first year, but the Chiefs did enough good things that they can see a brighter future.

The trouble is, they still need a lot of things to fall in their favor for a bright 2002.

The Chiefs attacked their needs and did a good job on the defensive line, which they fortified with top draft picks Ryan Sims and Eddie Freeman. But they appear short in other critical areas. One is wide receiver, where the Chiefs added veteran free agent Johnnie Morton but did nothing in the draft. Another is quarterback, where Trent Green's poor play was a major factor in the club's 6-10 record last year.

If Morton makes a major difference and Green is more comfortable in his second season with Kansas City, the Chiefs have a

chance to be playoff contenders. They have premier skill players on offense in halfback Priest Holmes and tight end Tony Gonzalez, and the offensive line is one of the strongest in the league. On defense, 10 starters return, although some will get bumped to reserve roles.

COACHING Strategies—

Offensive coordinator Al Saunders wanted to be more aggressive in the passing game last year but was forced to adjust at midsea-

son because of the poor play of Green and a severe talent deficiency at wide receiver.

So the Chiefs altered their game plan to take advantage of Holmes' skills. The move turned out nicely; the Chiefs won three of their last four games, and Holmes wound up as the NFL's leading rusher.

But make no mistake: The Chiefs would like to feature a more aggressive passing attack. That was the idea behind the acquisitions of Morton and tackle Willie Roaf. Holmes still will be a featured component of the offense, but he will share the spotlight with, among others, Gonzalez and Morton.

The Chiefs should benefit from a second year in defensive coordinator Greg Robinson's unorthodox system. Robinson usually has an unexpected twist—such as a frequent two-man pass rush—ready for an opponent.

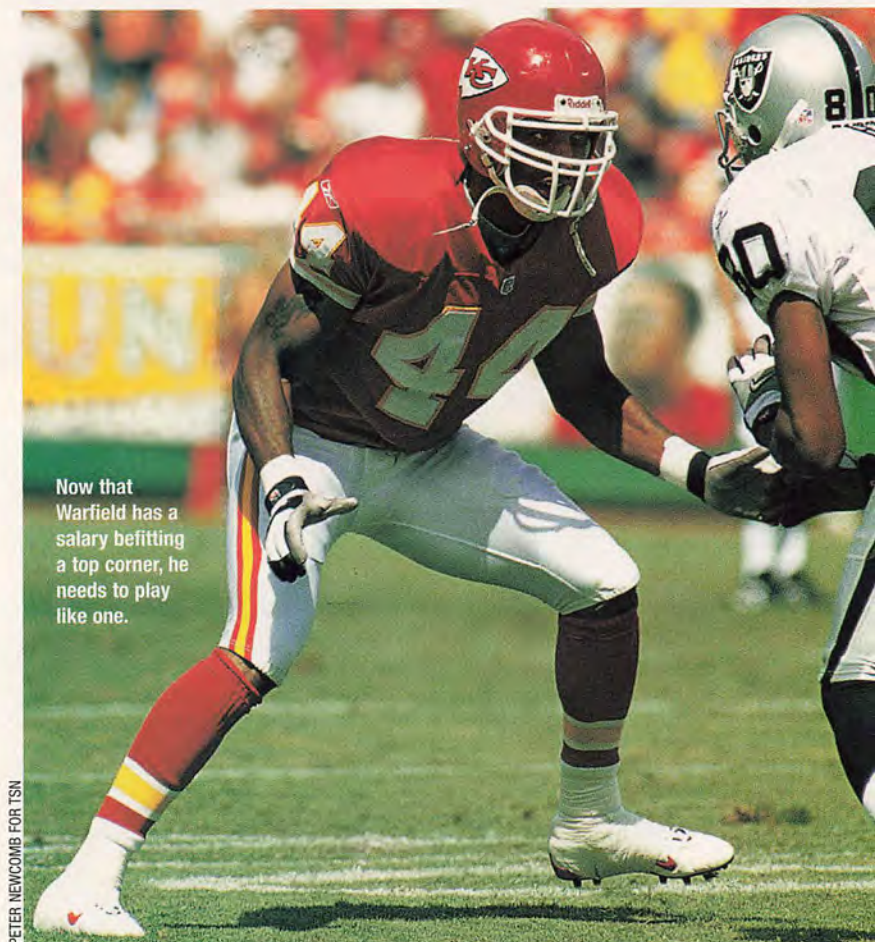
Robinson's system puts a premium on takeaways, but the Chiefs forced only 26 last

2002 Schedule

2002 Schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	at Cleveland	1:00	Nov. 10	at San Fran.	4:15
Sept. 15	JACKSONVILLE	1:00	Nov. 17	BUFFALO	1:00
Sept. 22	at New Eng.	1:00	Nov. 24	at Seattle	4:05
Sept. 29	MIAMI	1:00	Dec. 1	ARIZONA	1:00
Oct. 6	at N.Y. Jets	4:05	Dec. 8	ST. LOUIS	1:00
Oct. 13	at San Diego	4:15	Dec. 15	at Denver	4:05
Oct. 20	DENVER	1:00	Dec. 22	SAN DIEGO	1:00
Oct. 27	OAKLAND	1:00	Dec. 28	at Oak. (Sat.)	5:00
Nov. 3	Open date		Strength of schedule: 6th		



Now that Warfield has a salary befitting a top corner, he needs to play like one.

PETER NEWCOMB FOR TSN

season. Part of the problem is that they frequently played from behind. The Chiefs also blitzed more than they probably planned because their rush was so inconsistent when they sent only four players.

Players on both sides of the ball should be more comfortable with their respective systems and Vermeil's philosophy in general. The Chiefs won just two of their first nine games last year before rebounding to win four of the last seven. They should be more efficient from the start this season because Vermeil's entire staff returns intact and the stability should help.

Vermeil's fortunes are tied closely to those of Green. As coach of the Rams in 1999, Vermeil brought Green to St. Louis as a free agent. Vermeil pushed for last year's trade, which cost the Chiefs their first-round draft pick. But if he and his staff can't find a way to get more production and fewer turnovers from Green, the Chiefs are likely to be play-off observers for the fifth straight year.

Style—The contrasts on the staff are interesting. Saunders is the consummate teacher who usually has patient words after every play on the practice field. Robinson is the opposite, an in-your-face screamer with little patience for physical or mental errors.

Overseeing is Vermeil, an emotional sort who eventually builds a close bond with

almost every one of his players. His greatest strengths as a coach may be his vision for the type of person (not necessarily the type of player) he wants in his program and his ability to relate to that player and motivate him to play his hardest. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Green was one of the major disappointments of last season.

Billed as an accurate thrower and a quick, clever decision-maker, Green frequently was neither. Turnovers were a major problem. Green was intercepted an NFL-high 24 times. To be fair, the Chiefs left themselves woefully

short at wide receiver, and Green frequently paid the price. But he will need to improve dramatically this season, or the Chiefs likely will begin searching for his successor.

The team tried to help Green by adding Roaf to protect his blindside and Morton to be the No. 1 wide receiver. It also refined the playbook and will emphasize helping Green reduce the number of turnovers.

The top reserve is veteran Todd Collins, who has had the chance to prove little in four seasons with the Chiefs. His regular-season action has been limited to a handful of plays in a blowout victory last season. Collins will have plenty of rust to scrape off if the Chiefs need him for a long stretch.

The Chiefs signed former Jacksonville quarterback Jonathan Quinn to throw into the mix. Quinn showed a big, accurate arm in offseason workouts and should win the third roster spot. It's possible he could beat out Collins for the No. 2 spot with a strong showing in camp and the preseason.

Joe Germaine was disappointing in limited practice work after being acquired from the Rams immediately before the start of the 2001 season. He played in NFL Europe this spring and has much progress to make before he's ready for NFL competition.

GRADE: D+

Running backs—In his first season with the Chiefs, Holmes single-handedly transformed the club's ground game from one based on a power rushing attack to one featuring perimeter plays. Using traps, sweeps and draws, the Chiefs found ways to get Holmes the ball in open-field situations, where he excelled.

As much of a surprise as it was for Holmes to win the rushing title, it would be more of a shock to see him repeat the feat. The Chiefs last season shifted the burden of their offense from the struggling Green and an unsteady cast of receivers to Holmes. The Chiefs will attempt to be more productive in their passing game, but Holmes still can count on being a central figure.

He was the team's best receiver last season at making tacklers miss, and the Chiefs no doubt will look to him again in many situations in the passing game with screens and checkdowns.

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-6	Ryan Sims	DT	North Carolina	Has a strong, powerful body with good explosiveness.
2-43	Eddie Freeman	DT	Ala.-Birmingham	Gives maximum effort on every play, a trait the Chiefs love.
4-107	Omar Easy	RB	Penn State	Best chance for immediate contribution is on special teams.
5-143	Scott Fujita	LB	California	Won't play much this year; is being groomed to contribute in '03.
7-221	Maurice Rodriguez	LB	Fresno State	He'll have to make his living on special teams to stick in the NFL.

Previous five first rounds

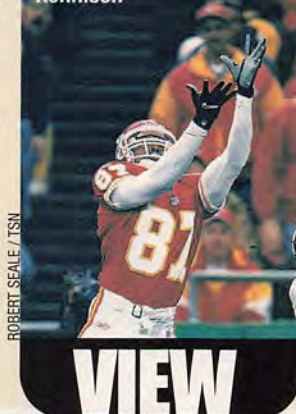
Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-13	Tony Gonzalez	TE	California	Starter with Chiefs
'98-27	Victor Riley	OT	Auburn	Starter with Saints
'99-14	John Tait	OT	Brigham Young	Starter with Chiefs
'00-21	Sylvester Morris	WR	Jackson State	Backup with Chiefs
'01	None			

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

The free-agent addition of **Johnnie Morton** was a good one. Look for him to produce big numbers in **Al Saunders'** offense. **Eddie Kennison**, acquired late last season after he quit the Broncos the night before a game, has never been consistent. He has talent, and **Dick Vermeil** is counting on his relationship with Kennison to bring it out. ... **Priest Holmes** will be counted on to again produce numbers similar to his league-leading 1,555 rushing yards last year. But the best potential combination on offense will be **Trent Green** to tight end **Tony Gonzalez**. Green was healthy this offseason for the first time in two years. Gonzalez was a no-show at May minicamp because of a contract dispute, but the Chiefs are savvy enough not to let that fester

OUTSIDE

Kennison



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

VIEW

THE CHIEFS

into the season. ... After they struggled at tackle in minicamp, they had to scramble to re-sign **Marcus Spears**, who had verbally agreed to a contract with the Ravens. They traded for **Willie Roaf**, but the jury is still out on whether he can return from the knee injury that hobbled him most of last year. ... The defense should be more comfortable in the second year of coordinator **Greg Robinson's** aggressive but sometimes overly risky scheme. They need **Eric Hicks** to return to the player he was in 2000 (14 sacks). ... The linebacking corps has to cope with the loss of **Donnie Edwards**, who defected to San Diego. They plan to fill his spot by moving **Mike Maslowski** outside. The question is: Does Maslowski have the speed and athleticism to play in space?

Because of his versatility and production, Holmes commands a presence on every down. That doesn't leave much of a role for fullback Tony Richardson or backup halfbacks Mike Cloud and Derrick Blaylock. Richardson is a versatile player who has been effective as a short-yardage and goal-line runner. But in normal situations and as a pass receiver, Richardson doesn't pose a great threat, and the Chiefs may choose to replace him with a third wide receiver or second tight end. Cloud is injury protection for Holmes. The Chiefs will attempt to find ways to get Blaylock involved because of his speed and breakaway ability. **GRADE: B+**

Receivers—It was evident last year from the start, when Chiefs wide receivers caught just

one pass in the season opener, that the team left itself thin at the position. It tried to upgrade, bringing in Eddie Kennison late last season and signing Morton in the offseason.

If they stay healthy and are successful signing franchise player Gonzalez to a contract, the Chiefs should be much better in the passing game. Kennison gave them a legitimate deep threat last season. Morton appears to have the skills the Chiefs are looking for in a No. 1 receiver. He excels at separating from coverage and runs well after the catch.

Morton and Kennison should take the pressure off Gonzalez, frequently the focus of coverages last season. He still managed 73 receptions.

The Chiefs also have Marvin Minnis, who is too inconsistent to be a starter but is capable of separating from coverage, being a reliable possession receiver and being the first or second receiver off the bench.

After that, the Chiefs have as many questions as they have bodies. Is Sylvester

Morris, a former first-round draft pick, healthy after missing all of last year and undergoing reconstructive knee surgery? Can he adapt to an offense that puts a premium on speed and quickness rather than size? Can Marc Boerigter make the transition from the CFL, where he was a productive player as a slotback, to the NFL?

The answers to those questions will tell whether the Chiefs were as successful at improving at wide receiver as they wanted to be. **GRADE: C**

Line—The trade for Roaf gives the Chiefs a chance to have a potentially dominating line. When Roaf is healthy, he can be a devastating player in the running and passing games.

But the acquisition is still a gamble. If Roaf can't rebound from a knee injury and surgery that cost him half of last season with

the Saints, the Chiefs will have weakened themselves on the line. They then would have to fill a tackle spot with an available veteran free agent or an untested young player.

If all goes as planned with Roaf, the Chiefs will move John Tait, their starting left tackle the last two seasons, to the right side. Tait, an accomplished pass blocker, should have little problem making the switch.

Marcus Spears provides veteran depth. Spears is insurance in case Roaf isn't ready for the season's start or Tait can't handle his new position.

Seven-time Pro Bowl guard Will Shields and center Casey Wiegmann are set as starters. If Roaf is healthy, the Chiefs will go to training camp with only one position to fill. Brian Waters and Donald Willis, who took turns at left guard last year, will battle for that spot.

Waters is younger and more athletic, Willis more experienced. The Chiefs would like to see Waters win the job. If he does, it would give them three inside linemen who can run, lead sweeps, trap and get downfield to block linebackers as necessary. Unless the Chiefs shop for veteran help, the backups would come from a group of untested players, leaving depth a concern. **GRADE: B+**

DEFENSE Line—After releasing tackles Chester McGlockton, Dan Williams and Steve Martin before last season, the Chiefs were overdue to replenish. That's exactly what they did in the draft, making Sims and Freeman their first two choices.

The Chiefs will build their line around

2001 results

Sept. 9	OAKLAND	L	24-27
Sept. 23	N.Y. GIANTS	L	3-13
Sept. 30	at Washington	W	45-13
Oct. 7	at Denver	L	6-20
Oct. 14	PITTSBURGH	L	17-20
Oct. 21	at Arizona	L	16-24
Oct. 25	INDIANAPOLIS	L	28-35
Nov. 4	at San Diego	W	25-20
Nov. 11	at N.Y. Jets	L	7-27
Nov. 18	Open date		
Nov. 25	SEATTLE	W	19-7
Nov. 29	PHILADELPHIA	L	10-23
Dec. 9	at Oakland	L	26-28
Dec. 16	DENVER (OT)	W	26-23
Dec. 23	SAN DIEGO	W	20-17
Dec. 30	at Jacksonville	W	30-26
Jan. 6	at Seattle	L	18-21

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. The Chiefs will wish they had spent their No. 2 draft pick on a wide receiver. Adding Johnnie Morton was a nice start, but there's no guarantee Morton will get help from the rest of the wide receivers.
2. OLB Donnie Edwards' versatility will be missed. He covered a lot of ground on running plays and blanketed receivers in passing situations.
3. Eric Warfield will prove worthy of his seven-year, \$28 million contract by finally delivering on his considerable potential.
4. Morten Andersen, who turns 42 before the season starts, will show he still has it. He'll display the range of a man 20 years his junior. The Chiefs will only wish he had that range on kickoffs.
5. The trade for Willie Roaf will be a steal. If Roaf is healthy, he will be worth far more than a third- or fourth-round pick in next year's draft.



Morton

Moves

Key additions

K Morten Andersen	Free agent/Giants
WR Marc Boerigter	Free agent/CFL
WR Johnnie Morton	Free agent/Lions
OT Willie Roaf	Trade/Saints

Key losses

WR Derrick Alexander	Free agent
LB Donnie Edwards	Free agent/Chargers
K Todd Peterson	Free agent/Steelers
TE Mikhael Ricks	Free agent/Lions
OT Victor Riley	Free agent/Saints

Stadium/Media

Arrowhead Stadium (79,451, grass).

Ticket information: 816-920-9400.

Training site: Univ. of Wisconsin-River Falls, River Falls, Wis.; 715-425-4580.

Radio: KCFX-FM (101).

Website: www.kcchiefs.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 6-10 (4th in AFC West); 4-4 in division; 5-7 in conference; 1-3 vs. NFC; 3-5 at home; 3-5 on road; 0-1 on artificial turf; 6-9 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Dick Vermeil's regular-season record: 6-10 in one season with Chiefs; 82-83 overall in 11 seasons with Chiefs, Rams and Eagles.

Vermeil's postseason record: 6-4 in five appearances with Rams and Eagles (1-1 in Super Bowls).

Team record last five years: 42-38 (.525, ranks T15th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1997.

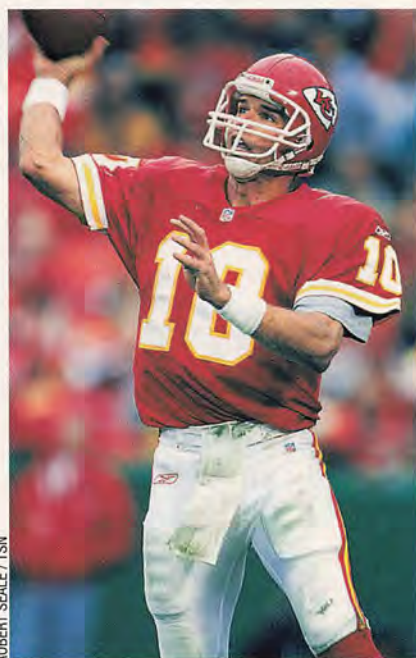
Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*354.6	3	5
Rushing offense	*125.5	3	6
Passing offense	*229.1	3	5
Scoring offense	320	9	16
Total defense	*331.5	13	23
Rushing defense	*133.8	14	27
Passing defense	*197.8	9	14
Scoring defense	344	13	23
Takeaways	26	11	22
Giveaways	33	T10	T19
Turnover differential	-7	11	22
Sacks	31	16	T25
Sacks allowed	39	8	16

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Dick Vermeil	Head coach	16	2
Al Saunders	Asst. HC/offensive coord.	20	2
Greg Robinson	Defensive coordinator	13	2
Irv Eatman	Assistant offensive line	4	2
Frank Ganz Jr.	Special teams	4	2
Peter Giunta	Defensive backs	12	2
Carl Hairston	Defensive line	8	2
Jeff Hurd	Strength and conditioning	8	5
Charlie Joiner	Wide receivers	16	2
Bob Karmelowicz	Defensive line	11	6
Billy Long	Asst. strength and cond.	2	2
Keith Rowen	Tight ends	19	4
James Saxon	Running backs	3	2
Terry Shea	Quarterbacks	2	2
Mike Solari	Offensive line	14	6
Jason Verdusco	Off. asst./quality control	3	2
Joe Vitt	Linebackers	24	3
Darwin Wallis	Def. asst./quality control	21	14



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

If Green doesn't perform better than he did in 2001, a fifth straight non-playoff season is likely.

Sims, who the club believes was far and away the best tackle to come out of the draft. Sims appears to have the ideal combination of power and quickness that eventually may land him in the Pro Bowl.

Freeman might end up winning a starting spot next to Sims. That tandem should quickly prove to be an upgrade to the collection of players that inhabited those positions last year. John Browning, Eric Downing and Derrick Ransom all are useful players and still will receive significant playing time as a part of a rotation. Browning might get some playing time as a reserve end, as will Rich Owens, a reserve last season.

The Chiefs believe better play from their tackles will increase the production of ends Eric Hicks and Duane Clemons. Playing with McGlockton and Williams in 2000, Hicks and Clemons combined for 21½ sacks. That number dropped to 10½ last year as the Chiefs achieved little push from their inside rushers. The Chiefs shouldn't have to blitz as much as last season in order to get pressure on the quarterback. **GRADE: C**

Linebackers—The most significant personnel loss in the offseason came at weakside linebacker, where the Chiefs released Donnie Edwards, their leading tackler the last four seasons, for salary-cap reasons. The Chiefs will feel his loss, particularly his superior coverage skills.

The Chiefs were concerned enough about filling Edwards' spot that they signed Chicago's Warrick Holdman to an offer sheet. But the Bears matched the offer and retained Holdman's rights.

That leaves Mike Maslowski first in line

for Edwards' job. Maslowski, who started a handful of games at strongside linebacker in the last half of the 2000 season, will give the Chiefs a more physical presence but he can't match Edwards' coverage ability.

Middle linebacker Marvyn Patton, 35, is an ageless wonder who shows no signs of slowing down. Beginning in 1993, the former Bills and Redskins player has started 142 of 144 NFL games. After a poor season in 2000, Lew Bush bounced back last year with a solid season on the strong side. The Chiefs weren't tempted to find a replacement during the offseason.

Glenn Cadrez again will be a top reserve. He knows Robinson's system well, and the two have a comfort level. Cadrez plays in many of the Chiefs' sub packages.

Scott Fujita and Maurice Rodriguez had the good fortune to be picked late in the draft by a team needing youth and depth at linebacker. Neither is likely to make a major contribution on defense this season, but they will get every chance to win jobs down the road. **GRADE: C-**

Secondary—The Chiefs are hoping to cut down on the number of opponents' big pass plays. Much of that depends on getting a stronger, more consistent pass rush. Some of it also depends on better, more consistent play from the cornerbacks.

The Chiefs gambled during the offseason by giving Eric Warfield a big contract. Nobody has doubted Warfield's athletic ability or potential to be a big-time, shutdown cornerback since he joined the club in 1998. But he has yet to deliver on an every-down basis.

William Bartee is pushing Ray Crockett for the starting spot on the other side and may win the competition by the start of the season. Bartee, after a slow start last year, made rapid progress and probably was ready for a starting role by midseason. He can be an effective No. 2 cornerback.

Crockett, 35, is nearing the end of his career, but he will have to help as the third corner.

Jerome Woods and Greg Wesley are an efficient tandem in the deep middle. Woods covers a lot of ground from his free safety position. Wesley, the strong safety, is a hard hitter. Veteran Jason Belser and second-year pro Shaunard Harts provide reliable depth. **GRADE: B-**

SPECIAL TEAMS The only major change figures to be at kicker, where Morten Andersen replaces Todd Peterson. Andersen will be 42 in August, but the Chiefs believe he has enough leg strength to be an upgrade over Peterson, who missed a couple of short field-goal attempts in critical situations last year.

But Andersen's kickoffs are a source of concern. Vermeil doesn't want to keep an extra kicker on the roster just to handle kickoffs, but he might be forced to do so. Lawrence Tynes, a disappointment in the preseason last year before being released, is back and could win the kickoff role with an

REALIGNMENT reality

The Chiefs were happy to see the Seahawks leave the AFC West if only because it means one fewer trip to the West Coast and one fewer bleary-eyed Monday. AFL tradition is more important to no other club owner than the Chiefs' Lamar Hunt, who helped form the American Football League and is entering his 43rd season in professional football. So he was relieved to have his club retain its old rivalries with the Raiders, Chargers and Broncos. In the short term, losing the Seahawks as a division rival probably will help the Chiefs, who are bidding farewell to a good offensive mind in Seattle coach Mike Holmgren. They will face new divisional head coaches in Bill Callahan (Oakland) and Marty Schottenheimer (San Diego), who coached the Chiefs from 1989 to 1998. If coaching stability counts for anything, the Chiefs and Broncos have a leg up on their AFC West rivals.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

The defensive line will be built around Sims, who has an ideal blend of power and quickness.

impressive showing in camp.

Punter Dan Stryzinski was a nice upgrade last year in his first season with the team. His hanging, directional kicks proved difficult for opponents to handle.

Dante Hall tantalized the Chiefs with his quickness on kick and punt returns but never delivered the big runback. Hall's elusiveness should make him more effective returning punts, but he actually was more productive on kickoffs. Rookie Pete Rebstock will be given a chance to win the job.

Deep snapper Kendall Gammon rarely misfires. Vermeil would prefer to give Gammon's roster spot to someone more versatile, but Gammon is so reliable the Chiefs will have a hard time replacing him. The coverage units, which were spotty last season, will miss Maslowski, the probable starter at weakside linebacker. **GRADE: C+**

BOTTOM LINE The Chiefs should be more competitive. It's a reasonable expectation to see them in the playoffs if they get better play from Green, their wide receivers and defensive line.

TSN

Adam Teicher covers the Chiefs for the Kansas City Star.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	■ Eddie Kennison
	□ Sylvester Morris
LT	● Willie Roaf
	□ Marcus Spears
LG	□ Brian Waters
	□ Donald Willis
C	■ Casey Wiegmann
	□ Brian Waters
RG	● Will Shields
	□ Darnell Alford
RT	■ John Tait
	□ Marcus Spears
TE	● Tony Gonzalez
	□ Jason Dunn
WR	■ Johnnie Morton
	□ Marvin Minnis
QB	■ Trent Green
	□ Todd Collins
RB	● Priest Holmes
	□ Mike Cloud
FB	■ Tony Richardson
	□ Omar Easy

Defense

LE	■ Eric Hicks
	■ Rich Owens
LT	□ Derrick Ransom
	■ Eddie Freeman
RT	■ Ryan Sims
	■ Eric Downing
RE	■ Duane Clemons
	■ John Browning
OLB	■ Mike Maslowski
	□ Larry Atkins
MLB	■ Marvyn Patton
	□ Monty Beisel
OLB	■ Lew Bush
	■ Glenn Cadrez
CB	■ William Bartee
	□ Ray Crockett
CB	■ Eric Warfield
	□ Ray Crockett
SS	● Greg Wesley
	■ Jason Belser
FS	■ Jerome Woods
	□ Shaunard Harts

Specialists

K	■ Morten Andersen
P	■ Dan Stryzinski
KR	□ Dante Hall
PR	□ Dante Hall
LS	● Kendall Gammon
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

CHIEFS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
15	Collins, Todd	6-4/219	11-5-71	8	Michigan	W-Buf./98	1/0
7	Germaine, Joe	6-2/220	8-11-75	4	Ohio State	T-StL/01	0/0
10	Green, Trent	6-3/210	7-9-70	9	Indiana	T-StL/01	16/16
12	Quinn, Jonathan	6-6/239	2-27-75	4	Middle Tennessee St.	UFA/02	6/1

Running backs

23	Blaylock, Derrick	5-9/200	8-23-79	2	Stephen F. Austin	D5b/01	0/0
34	Cloud, Mike	5-10/205	7-1-75	4	Boston College	D2/99	15/0
43	Easy, Omar	6-1/244	10-29-77	R	Penn State	D4/02	—
31	Holmes, Priest	5-9/213	10-7-73	6	Texas	UFA/01	16/16
49	Richardson, Tony (FB)	6-1/233	12-17-71	8	Auburn	FA/95	14/8

Receivers

45	Baber, Billy (TE)	6-3/258	1-17-79	1	Virginia	D5a/01	1/0
89	Dunn, Jason (TE)	6-6/273	11-15-73	6	Eastern Kentucky	FA/00	15/6
83	Gammon, Kendall (TE)	6-4/258	10-23-68	11	Pittsburg State	UFA/00	16/0
88	Gonzalez, Tony (TE)	6-4/249	2-27-76	6	California	D1/97	16/16
20	Hall, Dante	5-8/193	9-1-78	3	Texas A&M	D5a/00	13/0
14	Jackson, Curtis	5-10/194	9-22-73	2	Texas	FA/00	2/0
11	Jones, Reggie	6-0/195	5-8-71	5	Louisiana State	FA/01	9/0
87	Kennison, Eddie	6-1/190	1-20-73	7	Louisiana State	FA/01	13/7
81	Minnis, Marvin	6-1/171	2-6-77	2	Florida State	D3/01	13/11
84	Morris, Sylvester	6-3/216	10-6-77	3	Jackson State	D1/00	0/0
80	Morton, Johnnie	6-0/190	10-7-71	9	Southern California	FA/02	16/16

Offensive linemen

72	Alford, Darnell (T)	6-4/328	6-11-77	3	Boston College	D6/00	2/0
73	Jones, Willie (T)	6-6/358	12-17-75	4	Grambling	FA/00	12/0
77	Roaf, Willie (T)	6-5/312	4-18-70	10	Louisiana Tech	T-N.O./02	7/7
68	Shields, Will (G)	6-3/311	9-15-71	10	Nebraska	D3/93	16/16
70	Spears, Marcus (G)	6-4/312	9-28-71	9	Northwestern State	FA/97	16/16
76	Tait, John (T)	6-6/316	1-26-75	4	Brigham Young	D1/99	16/16
54	Waters, Brian (C)	6-3/315	2-18-77	3	North Texas	FA/00	16/8
62	Wiegmann, Casey (C)	6-2/285	7-20-75	6	Iowa	UFA/01	15/15
60	Willis, Donald (G)	6-3/330	7-15-73	5	North Carolina A&T	FA/00	14/4

Defensive linemen

93	Browning, John (T)	6-4/293	9-30-73	7	West Virginia	D3/96	6/6
99	Clemons, Duane (E)	6-5/277	5-23-74	7	California	UFA/00	16/15
79	Downing, Eric (T)	6-3/314	9-16-78	2	Syracuse	D3a/01	15/9
71	Freeman, Eddie (T)	6-5/310	1-4-78	R	Alabama-Birmingham	D2/02	—
98	Hicks, Eric (E)	6-6/280	6-17-76	5	Maryland	FA/98	16/16
94	Hobgood-Chittick, N. (T)	6-3/290	11-30-74	5	North Carolina	FA/01	10/1
75	McCleary, Norris (T)	6-6/305	5-10-77	2	East Carolina	FA/00	10/0
97	Owens, Rich (E)	6-6/288	5-22-72	7	Lehigh	UFA/01	16/1
95	Ransom, Derrick (T)	6-3/310	9-13-76	5	Cincinnati	D6/98	16/16
90	Sims, Ryan (T)	6-4/311	5-4-80	R	North Carolina	D1/02	—

Linebackers

50	Atkins, Larry	6-3/243	7-21-75	4	UCLA	D3b/99	12/0
96	Beisel, Monty	6-3/267	8-20-78	2	Kansas State	D4a/01	16/0
56	Bush, Lew	6-2/247	12-2-69	10	Washington State	FA/00	12/11
59	Cadrez, Glenn	6-2/240	1-2-70	11	Houston	FA/01	16/5
51	Fujita, Scott	6-5/248	4-28-79	R	California	D5/02	—
57	Maslowski, Mike	6-1/243	7-11-74	4	Wisconsin-La Crosse	FA/99	8/0
53	Patton, Marvyn	6-2/237	5-1-67	13	UCLA	UFA/99	16/15
61	Rodriguez, Maurice	6-1/237	8-30-78	R	Fresno State	D7/02	—
55	Stills, Gary	6-2/235	7-11-74	4	West Virginia	D3a/99	10/0

Defensive backs

26	Allen, Taje (CB)	5-11/185	11-6-73	6	Texas	UFA/01	16/0
24	Bartee, William (CB)	6-1/196	6-25-77	3	Oklahoma	D2/00	16/5
29	Belser, Jason	5-10/191	5-28-70	11	Oklahoma	UFA/01	16/0
39	Crockett, Ray (CB)	5-10/184	1-5-67	14	Baylor	FA/01	14/12
40	Harris, Corey (CB)	5-10/191	11-28-76	1	North Alabama	FA/99	4/0
42	Harts, Shaunard	5-11/207	8-4-78	1	Boise State	D7a/01	3/0
	McClellion, Central	6-0/190	9-15-75	R	Ohio State	FA/01	6/0
44	Warfield, Eric (CB)	6-0/198	3-3-76	4	Nebraska	D7a/98	16/16
25	Wesley, Greg (S)	6-2/208	3-19-76	3	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	D3/00	16/16
21	Woods, Jerome (S)	6-2/207	3-17-73	7	Memphis	D1/96	16/16

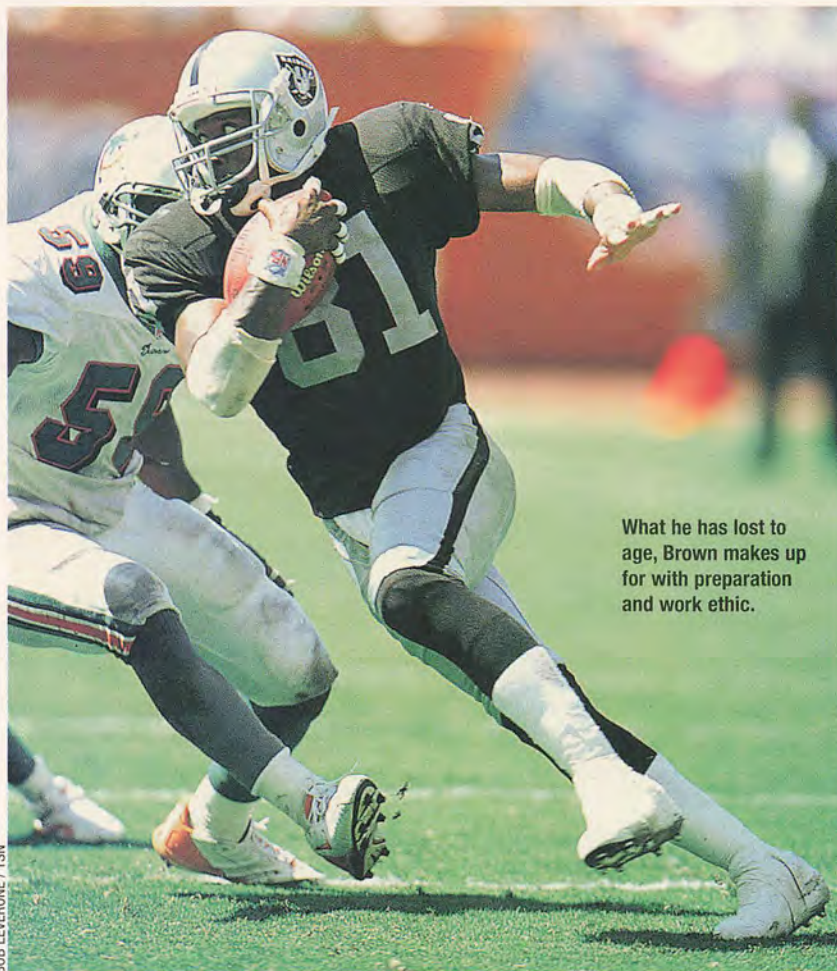
Specialists

8	Andersen, Morten (K)	6-2/205	8-19-60	21	Michigan State	UFA/02	16/0
4	Stryzinski, Dan (P)	6-2/200	5-15-65	13	Indiana	UFA/01	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: G Victor Allotey, WR Marc Boeriger, WR John Capel, LB Richard Jordan, DT Terrell Sands, FB Paul Shields, DE Jabbar Threats, DT Devin Wyman. Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Raiders



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

What he has lost to age, Brown makes up for with preparation and work ethic.

BY STEVE CORKRAN

The image of Jon Gruden riding off into the sunset with a Super Bowl trophy under his arm and wide receivers Jerry Rice and Tim Brown, cornerback Eric Allen, linebacker Greg Biekert, guard Steve Wisniewski and defensive end Trace Armstrong by his side seemed like too much of a fairy tale.

So it was understandable when managing general partner Al Davis cast aside Gruden one year before the coach's contract expired and before Gruden could realize his dream of taking a core group of veterans and winning a championship.

Gruden now is coaching the Buccaneers. The Raiders remain much the same as they were when he left. It is up to first-year coach Bill Callahan to take a squad full of aging talent and milk one last run from these players before they fade away.

Wisniewski and four defensive starters are gone. The Raiders replaced them with play-

ers regarded as just as good or better. They also drafted potential starters in cornerback Phillip Buchanon and linebacker Napoleon Harris, and get back three starters who missed most of last season.

That bodes well for a team fresh from winning back-to-back AFC West championships. Perhaps the biggest obstacle is a rugged schedule that includes non-divisional games against defending Super Bowl champion New England, NFC champion St. Louis, Pittsburgh, the Jets, Miami and San Francisco—all playoff teams last year.

Davis realizes the window of opportunity is closing fast on this collection of veterans. But now he is content knowing he has a bigger hand in how the final chapter unfolds.

COACHING Strategies—

Callahan is much like Gruden in that he is an offensive-minded coach who prefers running the ball as much as possible. One contrast in their styles is that Callahan is a bigger proponent of throwing the ball down-

field as a means of opening up other facets of the offense.

Callahan, who was the team's offensive coordinator/line coach under Gruden, favors a form of West Coast offense that focuses on ball control and spreading around the ball to numerous rushers and receivers. At the same time, he isn't afraid to take a shot every now and then at landing a big play. The Raiders' offensive approach is to run first and rely upon the passing game when necessary. However, they won't hesitate to adjust on the fly if teams overcompensate against one and neglect the other.

Chuck Bresnahan is entering his third season as defensive coordinator. He spent

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

Sept. 8	SEATTLE	4:15	Nov. 11	at Den. (Mon.)	9:00
Sept. 15	at Pittsburgh	8:30	Nov. 17	NEW ENG.	8:30
Sept. 22	Open date		Nov. 24	at Arizona	4:05
Sept. 29	TENNESSEE	4:15	Dec. 2	NYJ (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 6	at Buffalo	1:00	Dec. 8	at San Diego	4:15
Oct. 13	at St. Louis	4:15	Dec. 15	at Miami	1:00
Oct. 20	SAN DIEGO	4:05	Dec. 22	DENVER	4:15
Oct. 27	at Kansas City	1:00	Dec. 28	K. CITY (Sat.)	5:00
Nov. 3	SAN FRAN.	4:15	Strength of schedule: T 7th		

the past two years taking the foundation laid by predecessor Willie Shaw and tweaking it to find out what works best. What Bresnahan has shaped is a defensive style that features the cornerbacks and relies on the front seven to set the tempo for the game by stopping the run and applying consistent pressure on quarterbacks.

Style—Callahan is equal parts teacher and motivator; he's patient and Type A. His attention to detail is admirable. He takes copious notes on anything that might help him win a game down the road. He enjoys rolling up his sleeves and mixing it up with his players. That comes from many years as an assistant coach. He also knows which buttons to push and how to deal with a wide range of personalities.

The players respect Callahan because they realize he is willing to do whatever it takes to prepare them. Neither Callahan nor Bresnahan screams at his players much. They are firm believers in being even-tempered. Bresnahan possesses many of the same qualities as Callahan. Bresnahan always is teaching a player something and spending as much time as necessary to get across his point. He is a tireless worker who interacts well with players and coaches. He is firm with his players, yet willing to listen to suggestions. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—The Raiders are one of the few teams in the

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

It's obvious that the Raiders recognize that the 2002 season is it. They are an old team and running out of time before major changes take place in the makeup of the team. They are loading up for the last big attempt at a Super Bowl. ... **Rod Woodson** will bring leadership and stability to a secondary that has had shaky play at the safety positions. **John Parrella** brings nothing to the table as a pass rusher, but he can stop the run. His experience will be relayed to the front guys, which is invaluable. **Bill Romanowski** will bring attitude and physical, intimidating play. ... **Jon Gruden** was a major part of the Raiders' success. He and **Rich Gannon** worked well together. Gruden designed the offense and Gannon executed it. Gannon will miss Gruden.



THE RAIDERS

Gruden also did a masterful job of balancing two Hall of Fame receivers with big egos. His departure will be difficult to overcome. ... I am a big fan of Gannon's. He is an experienced player, a student of the game and a great competitor. Good decisions are a strong point for Gannon and separate him from many other quarterbacks. However, the system and two Hall of Fame receivers help. His long ball is very suspect, and he is not a precision passer. ... If **Trace Armstrong** can come back to true form, it will be huge for the defense. He is a relentless pass-rush specialist with a bag of tricks and deceptive strength. ... **Phillip Buchanon** is a big-time cover guy. His only weakness is size. He might have some mismatch problems with big receivers in the red zone.

league that can approach a season confident that their primary quarterback is going to start every game.

Rich Gannon instills such confidence by doing a great job preparing for the perils of playing quarterback, knowing what to expect ahead of time and not putting himself in many situations conducive to injury. If that's not enough to keep him healthy, Gannon still is tough enough to play through most injuries.

Gannon did not miss a game for the third season in a row in 2001. If anything, he is getting better with age (he turned 36 last December). He improved his passer rating for the fourth straight season and was selected to start in his third consecutive Pro

Bowl.

The Raiders do a fine job protecting Gannon by surrounding him with quality offensive linemen and having a multitude of options on every play. That enables Gannon to get rid of the ball quickly and to rely less on running the ball himself.

Gannon is so in tune with the offense that he is like a coach on the field. That helps the Raiders avoid being caught off guard by a defensive alignment and helps the offense handle extreme adversity.

Bobby Hoying and Marques Tuiasosopo again are the projected backups. Hoying is returning from a season-ending elbow injury and is facing a challenge for the No. 2 spot. Tuiasosopo made the most of his increased reps as a rookie last season and showed that he is capable of guiding the Raiders' offense. That is, if Gannon ever gets hurt or retires. **GRADE: A**

Running backs—This season likely won't be much different from last season in terms of which running backs make the team and what roles they fulfill. Charlie Garner clearly emerged as the lead back last season. He averaged 4.0 yards per rush but never had a 100-yard rushing game during the regular season. That he beat out Tyrone Wheatley speaks to Garner's impressive all-around game.

Garner again proved he is durable enough to handle the bulk of the rushing load. He also finished third on the team with 72 receptions and blocked as well as any of Oakland's running backs. Garner's presence makes it easier on Gannon, who knows that Garner almost always finds a way to get open for a short pass when a play breaks down. That leads to few disastrous plays.

Wheatley's role remains undefined. He went from being the lead back in 1999 and 2000 to a spot player last season. He wasn't happy with his reduced role, but he played the role of good soldier in the interest of team harmony. He likely won't settle for a

reserve role this season because he believes he is in his prime and is capable of being a lead back.

Zack Crockett is the short-yardage and goal-line back. Randy Jordan and Terry Kirby will be asked to fill in on occasion, but they play mostly special teams. Fullback Jon Ritchie's role won't change much. He is a blocker first and foremost. He caught 19 passes last year but did not have any carries.

Running backs is an area that doesn't need much tinkering and will be a strength for the third straight season. **GRADE: B+**
Receivers—The Raiders' search for a productive complement to perennial go-to guy Brown yielded 83 receptions for 1,139 yards and nine touchdowns from Rice. Gannon now has reliable options, with Rice arguably his top choice.

Rice is motivated by a burning desire to show the 49ers, his former team, that he still is among the league's elite receivers. Rice and Brown make each other better because they feed off each other's successes. The duo had a combined 174 receptions for 2,304 yards and 18 touchdowns last season. They thrive, in spite of their advanced football ages, because they know the West Coast offense inside and out, they study the tendencies of the defenders they play against, and they spend an inordinate amount of time during the offseason getting in shape.

Brown and Rice no longer get open deep on a consistent basis. That's where Jerry

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. Derrick Gibson, a No. 1 pick in 2001, will claim a starting safety spot by unseating either FS Anthony Dorsett or SS Johnnie Harris.
2. Charles Woodson and rookie Phillip Buchanon will form one of the most exciting and potent cornerback tandems in the NFL, making it difficult for opponents to pass against Oakland.
3. DE Trace Armstrong will make a successful return from a ruptured Achilles' tendon and lead the Raiders with a double-digit total in sacks.
4. Jerry Rice will be the Raiders' top receiver despite turning 40 during the regular season.
5. QB Rich Gannon will miss a start for the first time since joining the Raiders in 1999. The team will have to rely on a backup with little experience—Bobby Hoying or Marques Tuiasosopo—to run an offense full of veterans.



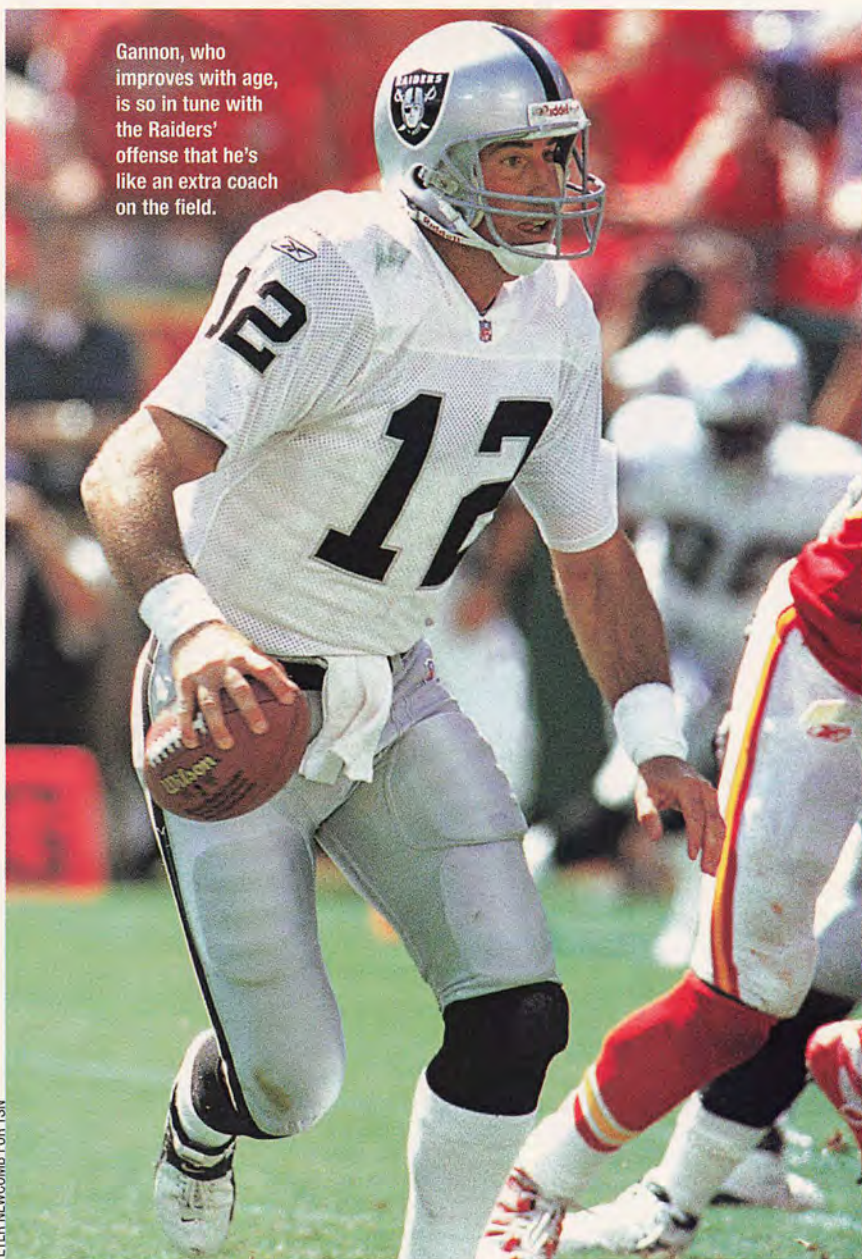
2001 results

Sept. 9	at Kansas City	W	27-24
Sept. 23	at Miami	L	15-18
Sept. 30	SEATTLE	W	38-14
Oct. 7	DALLAS	W	28-21
Oct. 14	at Indianapolis	W	23-18
Oct. 21	Open date		
Oct. 28	at Philadelphia	W	20-10
Nov. 5	DENVER	W	38-28
Nov. 11	at Seattle	L	27-34
Nov. 18	SAN DIEGO	W	34-24
Nov. 25	at N.Y. Giants	W	28-10
Dec. 2	ARIZONA (OT)	L	31-34
Dec. 9	KANSAS CITY	W	28-26
Dec. 15	at San Diego	W	13-6
Dec. 22	TENNESSEE	L	10-13
Dec. 30	at Denver	L	17-23
Jan. 6	N.Y. JETS	L	22-24
Jan. 12	N.Y. JETS*	W	38-24
Jan. 19	at N.E.* (OT)	L	13-16

*AFC playoff game.

Gannon, who improves with age, is so in tune with the Raiders' offense that he's like an extra coach on the field.

PETER NEWCOMB FOR TSN



Porter enters the picture. Gannon looked Porter's way more often last season, and that helped open up things for Brown and Rice.

Porter and James Jett must show that they are capable of getting open deep on a regular basis and are worthy of more than a token pass here and there. Tight ends Roland Williams, Jeremy Brigham and Mondriel Fulcher are viewed mainly as extra blockers who catch an occasional pass when things break down. **GRADE: A-**

Line—The Raiders lost their top offensive lineman from the past 13 seasons when Wisniewski retired. Fortunately, they were able to re-sign Frank Middleton and plug him in at Wisniewski's left guard position. That, combined with the expected returns of center Barret Robbins and right guard Mo Collins from season-ending injuries, virtually assures the Raiders of fielding a cohesive and formidable line.

The bar is set high. The Raiders allowed only 27 sacks last season, even without Robbins and Collins for most of the season. Their returns are reason enough for the coaches to get giddy over the line. Tackles Barry Sims and Lincoln Kennedy are healthy and back for another season after playing at a high level last season. None of the projected starters has any apparent weaknesses in run blocking or pass blocking.

One of Callahan's strengths as a line coach is getting the backups enough reps and making sure they are versatile enough to play more than one position. That proved critical last season, when Adam Treu replaced Robbins and Middleton replaced Collins without much of a drop-off, if any. And Matt Stinchcomb, Brad Badger and Darryl Ashmore all started games for the Raiders or other NFL teams in recent seasons. They give the Raiders impressive depth. **GRADE: A-**

DEFENSE Line—Starting tackles Grady Jackson and Darrell Russell are gone—Jackson to the Saints and Russell to a one-year suspension for violating the league's substance-abuse policy.

The club's answer to those seemingly huge losses was to sign Chargers free agent John Parrella and call upon fourth-year player Roderick Coleman as replacements. Parrella is a proven run stopper and plays hard on every play. That is something the Raiders can use in the interior. Coleman played well, at times, during Russell's two suspensions last season. However, at 6-2 and 265 pounds, he might not hold up for a full season. He hit a plateau midway through last season.

What the Raiders lack in quality, they will attempt to offset with quantity. Defensive end Trace Armstrong is expected back from a season-ending ruptured Achilles' tendon and will be counted on to record sacks (he led the AFC with 16½ for Miami in 2000) and provide leadership for a line filled with young and inexperienced players.

Regan Upshaw led the Raiders with seven

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-17	Phillip Buchanon	DB	Miami (Fla.)	Expected to earn starting job this year; 5-10 height is only negative.
1-23	Napoleon Harris	LB	Northwestern	Reliable tackler and versatile enough to play linebacker or end.
2-53	Langston Walker	OT	California	Doesn't fill an immediate need, but team will be patient. A project.
2-55	Doug Jolley	TE	Brigham Young	Seems destined for practice squad; Raiders are loaded at TE.
5-147	Kenyon Coleman	DE	UCLA	Has ability to start right away—but will he work hard enough?
6-189	DeRodrick Nash	DB	Albany State	Great size and speed but likely has too many flaws to make roster.
6-197	Larry Ned	RB	San Diego State	He'll have difficulty trying to unseat a running back on this team.
7-235	Ronald Curry	QB	North Carolina	Intriguing prospect for another position but unlikely to stick as QB.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97-2	Darrell Russell	DT	Southern California	Serving NFL suspension; won't play in 2002
'98-4	Charles Woodson	CB	Michigan	Starter with Raiders
'98-23	Mo Collins	OT	Florida	Starter with Raiders
'99-18	Matt Stinchcomb	OT	Georgia	Backup with Raiders
'00-17	Sebastian Janikowski	K	Florida State	Starter with Raiders
'01-28	Derrick Gibson	S	Florida State	Backup with Raiders

sacks in 2001, and fellow end Tony Bryant had only five. Armstrong could find the going rough without Jackson and Russell to occupy more than one blocker on most plays. Opponents will be more apt to focus on Armstrong unless Parrella, Coleman, Chris Cooper, Michael Mohring and Junior Ioane fill the sizable void in the middle.

GRADE: B+

Linebackers—Biekert is in a familiar position: playing middle linebacker for a 10th season and learning the nuances of the new guys flanking him. In an attempt to upgrade the overall play of this unit, the Raiders replaced outside linebackers William

Woodson will start at left cornerback, where he played well last year despite suffering from a turf-toe injury that prevented him from practicing during the last half of the season. The injury didn't need surgery, but it is requiring Woodson to rest more than he prefers.

The Raiders must decide whether Allen, Tory James or Buchanan is the best option opposite Woodson. It's Allen's job if he decides to return for a 15th season. James and Buchanan are ready for full-time action if Allen retires. James led the team in interceptions last season and benefits from his knowledge and experience with the defensive scheme. Buchanan is viewed as a shutdown corner in the mold of Woodson and is expected to challenge for a starting spot.

The safety positions are far from settled. Incumbents Anthony Dorsett and Johnnie Harris are being pushed by free-agent acquisition Rod Woodson and second-year player Derrick Gibson. It's safe to assume that Woodson will unseat one of the starters based on the fact that he is more experienced and accomplished.

Gibson also stands a strong shot at earning a starting spot. A first-round pick in 2001, he played well during his limited action as a rookie.

Dorsett and Harris are more experienced than Gibson, but neither is so good that he is guaranteed a starting job. Dorsett needs to be more consistent in

pass coverage and open-field tackling.

GRADE: B

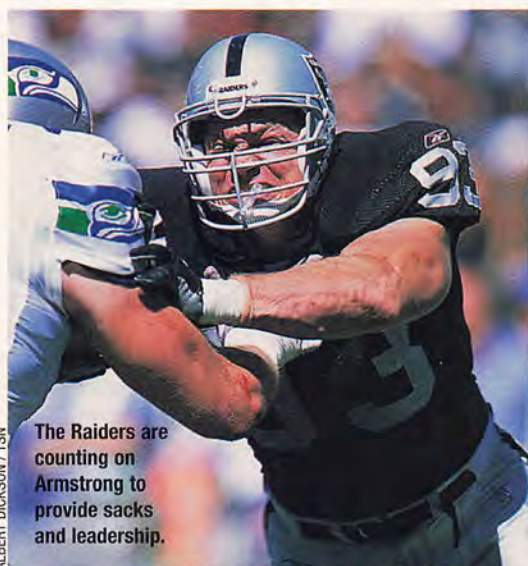
SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Sebastian Janikowski and Pro Bowl punter Shane Lechler performed at high levels last season. There isn't any reason to think they won't get even better in their third NFL seasons.

Janikowski made 23 of 28 field-goal attempts, but he still has room for improvement. He doesn't get the desired depth on kickoffs consistently, and the Raiders don't yet have the confidence in him to attempt field goals beyond 55 yards. He needs to develop in both areas, because that's part of the reason the Raiders drafted him in the first round in 2000.

After a great rookie season, Lechler performed at an even higher level last season. He turned into a better all-around punter by incorporating angle kicks and short-but-high punts into his arsenal. He used to rely on his leg strength and often faltered in situations that begged for deftness. That no longer is an issue.

Kick coverage and punt returns are the two areas screaming for help. The Raiders started strong in kick coverage last season but got progressively worse as the season wore on. It cost them in just about every



ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

The Raiders are counting on Armstrong to provide sacks and leadership.

Thomas and Elijah Alexander with Eric Barton and Bill Romanowski.

Biekert remains the heart and soul of the linebackers and the entire defense. He shows no signs of slowing down, despite nine years of playing almost every down and being in on a high percentage of tackles. The addition of Romanowski can benefit Biekert and the defense. Romanowski is a proven winner with a penchant for making big plays in big games. Look for the Raiders to turn him loose on the quarterback and put him in position to make some of those plays from the strongside spot.

Barton is the odds-on candidate to start at weakside linebacker but faces stiff competition. He must beat out Gerald Dixon, a veteran, and Harris.

Barton spent the past two seasons playing mostly on special teams while learning under Thomas. That experience will serve Barton well in his second stint as a starter—he started three games as a rookie in 1999 before losing the job to Thomas.

Travian Smith and Bobby Brooks are apt to spend most of their time playing special teams unless they suddenly mature into every-down players. **GRADE: B-**

Secondary—Few teams have as many quality cornerbacks as the Raiders. Charles

Moves

Key additions

OL Brad Badger
S Calvin Branch
LB Gerald Dixon
QB Rick Mirer
DL Mike Mohring
DT John Parrella
LB Bill Romanowski
CB Terrance Shaw
S Rod Woodson

Free agent/Vikings
Free agent
Free agent/Chargers
Free agent
Free agent/Chargers
Free agent/Chargers
Free agent/Broncos
Free agent/Patriots
Free agent/Ravens

Key losses

LB Elijah Alexander
LS Aaron Graham
DT Grady Jackson
QB Rodney Peete
SS Marquez Pope
DT Darrell Russell
CB Terrance Shaw
LB William Thomas
G Steve Wisniewski

Free agent
Free agent
Free agent/Saints
Free agent/Panthers
Free agent
One-year NFL suspension
Free agent/Patriots
Retired
Retired

Stadium/Media

Network Associates Coliseum (63,142, grass).

Ticket information: 800-949-2626.

Training site: Napa, Calif.; 707-256-1000.

Radio: The Ticket (1050-AM).

Website: www.raiders.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 10-6 (1st in AFC West); 6-2 in division; 7-5 in conference; 3-1 vs. NFC; 5-3 at home; 5-3 on road; 2-1 on artificial turf; 8-5 on grass.

2001 playoff record: Defeated N.Y. Jets, 38-24, in AFC wild-card game; lost to New England, 16-13 (OT), in AFC semifinal game.

Bill Callahan's regular-season record: First season as NFL head coach.

Callahan's postseason record: None.

Team record last five years: 42-38 (.525, ranks T15th in league in that span).

Last time missed playoffs: 1999.

Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*335.1	4	7
Rushing offense	*103.4	14	24
Passing offense	*231.7	2	4
Scoring offense	399	2	4
Total defense	*316.9	T7	T16
Rushing defense	*124.3	11	22
Passing defense	*192.7	5	9
Scoring defense	327	11	19
Takeaways	24	T13	T25
Giveaways	25	4	8
Turnover differential	-1	8	T16
Sacks	41	T6	T13
Sacks allowed	27	T2	T5

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Bill Callahan	Head coach	8	5
Marc Trestman	Offensive coordinator	15	2
Chuck Bresnahan	Defensive coordinator	9	5
Fred Biletnikoff	Wide receivers	14	14
Willie Brown	Squad development	18	18
Bob Casullo	Special teams	3	3
Garrett Glemont	Strength & conditioning	8	8
Chris Griswold	Quality control-defense	1	1
Jim Harbaugh	Offensive assistant	1	1
Aaron Kromer	Offensive line	2	2
Ron Lynn	Defensive backs	17	3
Don Martin	Quality control-defense	5	5
John Morton	Senior offensive assistant	5	5
Jay Norvell	Tight ends	5	1
Fred Pagac	Linebackers	2	2
Skip Peete	Running backs	5	5
David Shaw	Quarterbacks	6	5
Chris Turner	Quality control-offense	1	1
Mike Waufle	Defensive line	5	5

REALIGNMENT reality

Realignment does little to help or hinder the Raiders because they still have two games against each of their remaining AFC West rivals—the Broncos, Chiefs and Chargers. Seattle has moved to the NFC West, which is just fine with the Raiders. The Seahawks typically beat the Raiders as often as the Raiders beat them (since 1994, the teams have split their 16 regular-season games). The biggest change will come in the form of travel. It could mean one more cross-continental flight for an East Coast game as opposed to a yearly north-south trip to Seattle. That will be the case this season, when the Raiders visit Pittsburgh. The Raiders' chances of winning the AFC West are no easier than in the past two seasons, when they claimed division titles. The Raiders lost at Seattle both years, so compared with that, a cross-country trip to take on the Steelers doesn't sound too bad.



ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

Not many players begin their careers with four Pro Bowl appearances, but Charles Woodson did.

game after the midpoint of the season.

They addressed this issue by drafting two players who specialize on kick coverage: Buchanon and Ronald Curry. The Raiders need the most help on punt returns, where Charles Woodson and Brown shared duties last season. Kirby is the leading candidate to return kicks.

Harris, Buchanon, Curry and free-agent defensive back Terrance Shaw will be used on kick coverage, adding more speed and talent. The return of ace coverage man Eric Johnson from a season-ending injury also will help remedy what ailed the coverage teams. Treu is expected to handle long-snapping duties, a job he shined at in his first four NFL seasons. **GRADE: B-**

BOTTOM LINE The Raiders did a fine job bringing back their core veterans, replacing starters Wisniewski, Jackson, Russell, Thomas and Alexander, and adding two players in the draft—Buchanon and Harris—who are capable of starting or making an impact this season. They are one of the league's oldest teams, yet they remain talented enough to be considered legitimate Super Bowl contenders. **TSN**

Steve Corkran covers the Raiders for the Contra Costa Times.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Tim Brown
	□ Marcus Knight
LT	● Barry Sims
	■ Brad Badger
LG	■ Frank Middleton
	□ Matt Stinchcomb
C	● Barret Robbins
	■ Adam Treu
RG	● Mo Collins
	□ Darryl Ashmore
RT	● Lincoln Kennedy
	□ Darryl Ashmore
TE	■ Roland Williams
	□ Jeremy Brigham
WR	● Jerry Rice
	■ Jerry Porter
QB	● Rich Gannon
	■ Marques Tuiasosopo
RB	● Charlie Garner
	■ Tyrone Wheatley
FB	■ Jon Ritchie
	■ Zack Crockett

Defense

DE	■ Regan Upshaw
	■ Josh Taves
DT	■ John Parrella
	■ Chris Cooper
DT	■ Roderick Coleman
	■ Michael Mohring
DE	■ Tony Bryant
	□ DeLawrence Grant
OLB	■ Eric Barton
	□ Napoleon Harris
MLB	■ Greg Biekert
	■ Bobby Brooks
OLB	● Bill Romanowski
	□ Travian Smith
CB	■ Eric Allen
	■ Tory James
CB	● Charles Woodson
	■ Phillip Buchanon
SS	■ Johnnie Harris
	■ Derrick Gibson
FS	● Rod Woodson
	□ Anthony Dorsett

Specialists

K	● S. Janikowski
P	● Shane Lechler
KR	■ Terry Kirby
PR	■ Phillip Buchanon
LS	● Adam Treu
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

RAIDERS ROSTER

No.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
	Curry, Ronald	6-1/220	5-28-79	R	North Carolina	D7/02	—
12	Gannon, Rich	6-3/210	12-20-65	15	Delaware	UFA/99	16/16
14	Hoying, Bobby	6-3/220	9-20-72	7	Ohio State	T-Phi/99	0/0
8	Tuiasosopo, Marques	6-1/220	3-22-79	1	Washington	D2/01	1/0
Running backs							
32	Crockett, Zack	6-2/245	12-2-72	8	Florida State	UFA/99	16/0
25	Garner, Charlie	5-10/195	2-13-72	9	Tennessee	UFA/01	16/15
28	Jordan, Randy	5-11/215	6-6-70	9	North Carolina	UFA/98	16/0
42	Kirby, Terry	6-1/215	1-20-70	9	Virginia	UFA/99	11/0
	Ned, Larry	5-10/215	8-23-78	R	San Diego State	D6b/02	—
40	Ritchie, Jon (FB)	6-1/250	9-4-74	5	Stanford	D3/98	15/10
47	Wheatley, Tyrone	6-0/235	1-19-72	8	Michigan	FA/99	12/3
Receivers							
85	Barlow, Reggie	6-0/190	1-22-73	6	Alabama State	FA/01	—
87	Brigham, Jeremy (TE)	6-6/250	3-22-75	4	Washington	D5a/98	14/3
81	Brown, Tim	6-0/195	7-22-66	14	Notre Dame	D1/88	16/16
89	Fulcher, Mondriel (TE)	6-3/245	10-15-76	3	Miami (Fla.)	D7a/00	13/1
	Hatchette, Matthew	6-3/193	5-1-74	7	Langston (Okla.)	FA/02	11/0
82	Jett, James	5-10/170	12-28-70	10	West Virginia	FA/93	10/0
83	Knight, Marcus	6-1/180	6-19-78	2	Michigan	FA/00	5/1
84	Porter, Jerry	6-2/225	7-14-78	3	West Virginia	D2/00	15/1
80	Rice, Jerry	6-2/196	10-13-62	17	Mississippi Valley St.	FA/01	16/15
86	Williams, Roland (TE)	6-5/265	4-27-75	5	Syracuse	T-SIL/01	16/15
Offensive linemen							
	Ackerman, Tom	6-3/296	9-6-72	7	E. Washington	FA/02	16/0
77	Ashmore, Darryl	6-7/310	11-1-69	10	Northwestern	FA/98	14/1
70	Badger, Brad (T)	6-4/319	1-11-75	6	Stanford	FA/02	13/12
79	Collins, Mo (G)	6-4/335	9-22-76	5	Florida	D1b/98	6/5
72	Kennedy, Lincoln (T)	6-6/340	2-12-71	10	Washington	T-Atl/96	15/15
73	Middleton, Frank (G)	6-3/330	10-25-74	6	Arizona	UFA/01	13/11
63	Robbins, Barret (C)	6-3/320	8-26-73	7	Texas Christian	D2/95	2/2
65	Sims, Barry (T)	6-5/295	12-1-74	3	Utah	FA/99	15/15
74	Stinchcomb, Matt (G)	6-6/310	6-3-77	3	Georgia	D1/99	14/1
62	Treu, Adam (C)	6-5/300	6-24-74	6	Nebraska	D3/97	16/14
Defensive linemen							
93	Armstrong, Trace (E)	6-4/275	10-5-65	14	Florida	UFA/01	3/0
94	Bryant, Tony (E)	6-6/280	9-3-76	4	Florida State	D2/99	16/16
	Coleman, Kenyon (E)	6-4/284	4-10-79	R	UCLA	D5/02	—
57	Coleman, Roderick (E)	6-2/265	8-16-76	4	East Carolina	D5b/99	14/6
75	Cooper, Chris (T)	6-5/275	12-27-77	2	Nebraska-Omaha	D6/01	11/1
95	Grant, DeLawrence (E)	6-3/280	11-18-79	1	Oregon State	D3/01	2/0
92	Ioane, Junior (T)	6-4/320	7-21-77	2	Arizona State	D4/00	3/0
98	Mohring, Mike (T)	6-5/295	3-22-74	5	Pittsburgh	UFA/02	9/0
97	Parrella, John (T)	6-3/300	11-22-69	10	Nebraska	UFA/02	16/16
96	Russell, Darrell (T)	6-5/325	5-27-76	5	Southern California	D1/97	11/7
99	Taves, Josh (E)	6-7/280	5-13-72	3	Northeastern	FA/00	8/3
91	Upshaw, Regan (E)	6-4/260	8-12-75	7	California	UFA/00	16/15
Linebackers							
50	Barton, Eric	6-2/240	9-29-77	4	Maryland	D5a/99	16/1
54	Biekert, Greg	6-2/255	3-14-69	10	Colorado	D7/93	16/16
55	Brooks, Bobby	6-2/240	3-3-76	3	Fresno State	FA/99	16/0
51	Dixon, Gerald	6-3/250	6-20-69	10	South Carolina	UFA/02	16/15
	Harris, Napoleon	6-3/253	2-25-79	R	Northwestern	D1b/02	—
53	Romanowski, Bill	6-4/245	4-2-66	15	Boston College	FA/02	16/16
56	Smith, Travian	6-4/240	8-26-75	4	Oklahoma	D5b/98	16/2
Defensive backs							
21	Allen, Eric	5-10/185	11-22-65	15	Arizona State	T-NO/98	16/15
	Buchanon, Phillip	5-10/186	9-19-80	R	Miami (Fla.)	D1a/02	—
33	Dorsett, Anthony (S)	5-11/200	9-14-73	7	Pittsburgh	UFA/00	16/16
26	Gibson, Derrick (S)	6-2/215	3-22-79	2	Florida State	D1/01	16/0
37	Harris, Johnnie (S)	6-2/210	8-21-72	4	Mississippi State	FA/99	16/5
20	James, Tory (CB)	6-2/185	5-18-73	6	Louisiana State	UFA/00	16/1
39	Jennings, Brandon (S)	6-0/195	7-15-78	2	Texas A&M	FA/01	8/0
41	Johnson, Eric (S)	6-0/210	4-30-76	3	Nebraska	FA/01	7/0
	Nash, Keyon (CB)	6-3/213		R	Albany (Ga.)	D6a/02	—
22	Shaw, Terrance (CB)	5-11/200	11-11-73	8	Stephen F. Austin	FA/02	13/3
24	Woodson, Charles	6-1/205	10-7-76	5	Michigan	D1a/98	16/16
	Woodson, Rod (S)	6-0/205	3-10-65	15	Purdue	FA/02	16/16
Specialists							
11	Janikowski, Seb. (K)	6-1/255	3-2-78	3	Florida State	D1/00	15/0
9	Lechler, Shane (P)	6-2/225	8-7-76	3	Texas A&M	D5/00	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: S Calvin Branch, WR Macey Brooks, CB Derek Combs, DE Jon Harris, RB Madre Hill, P Eddie Howard, CB Clarence Love, WR Kevin McKenzie, QB Rick Mirer, G Jeremy Staat.
Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.



Chargers

BY JIM TROTTER

Alex Spanos knows a lot about building success. He used an \$800 loan in 1951 to create what now is one of the nation's leading construction companies. Success on the football field, however, still eludes him.

Spanos has witnessed just four winning seasons in the 17 years he has owned the Chargers, and only one has come since 1995. The team's six wins in the past two seasons are a league low, and its six-year streak of not reaching the playoffs trails only the Bengals.

2002 schedule

All times Eastern

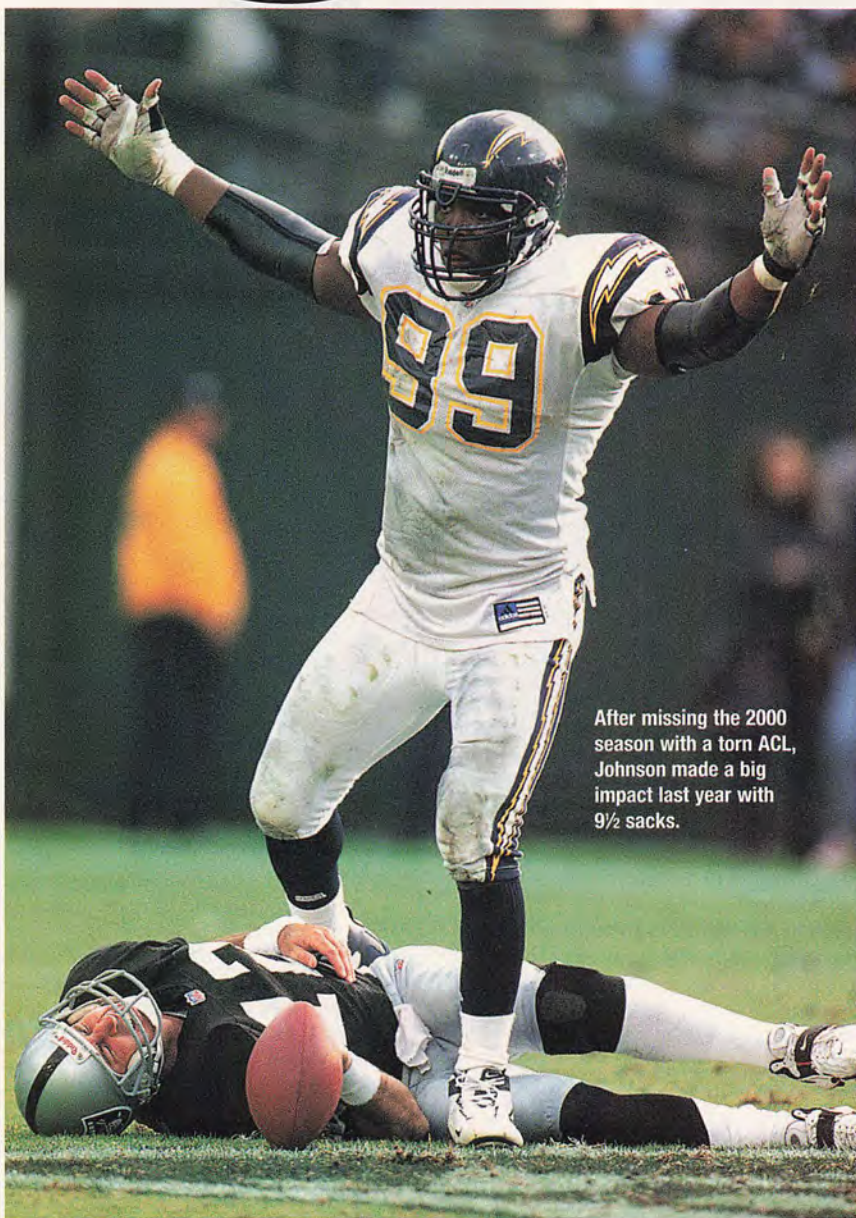
Sept. 8	at Cincinnati	1:00	Nov. 10	at St. Louis	1:00
Sept. 15	HOUSTON	4:15	Nov. 17	SAN FRAN.	4:05
Sept. 22	at Arizona	4:05	Nov. 24	at Miami	1:00
Sept. 29	NEW ENGLAND	4:15	Dec. 1	DENVER	4:05
Oct. 6	at Denver	4:05	Dec. 8	OAKLAND	4:15
Oct. 13	KANSAS CITY	4:15	Dec. 15	at Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 20	at Oakland	4:05	Dec. 22	at Kansas City	1:00
Oct. 27	Open date		Dec. 29	SEATTLE	4:15
Nov. 3	N.Y. JETS	4:05	Strength of schedule: T 1st		

Enter Marty Schottenheimer, the franchise's fifth coach in seven years. He is being asked to do what no San Diego coach could in recent history—lead the Chargers to a winning record and playoff spot. If history is any indication, Schottenheimer will succeed. He has had only one losing season in 16 years as a head coach and, with 153 career regular-season wins, ranks second to the Falcons' Dan Reeves in the NFL. His 11 playoff appearances trail only Don Shula (19), Tom Landry (18), Chuck Noll (12) and Bud Grant (12).

The football gods haven't smiled often on Schottenheimer in the playoffs, where he is just 5-11, but that's of no concern to Spanos. He just wants to make the playoffs, and Schottenheimer has proved he can accomplish that.

COACHING Strategies—The biggest change will come on defense, where Schottenheimer plans to use more bump-and-run coverage than his predecessors. Former coordinator Joe Pascale never had the wealth of talent new coordinator Dale Lindsey possesses. The additions of rookie cornerback Quentin Jammer and speedy linebacker Donnie Edwards will allow San Diego to attack offenses in the manner Schottenheimer favors.

At the same time, the foundation of the defense will be stopping the run. San Diego ranked seventh in the league in run defense last season, allowing 94 yards per game; it should continue its success against the run,



After missing the 2000 season with a torn ACL, Johnson made a big impact last year with 9½ sacks.

TOM HAUCK FOR TSN

even though tackle John Parrella signed with the Raiders.

The offense will be similar to last season's balanced attack under Norv Turner. New coordinator Cam Cameron, Turner's quarterbacks coach for three seasons with the Redskins, relies on many of the principles Turner does, though he plans to add a few wrinkles to the passing game.

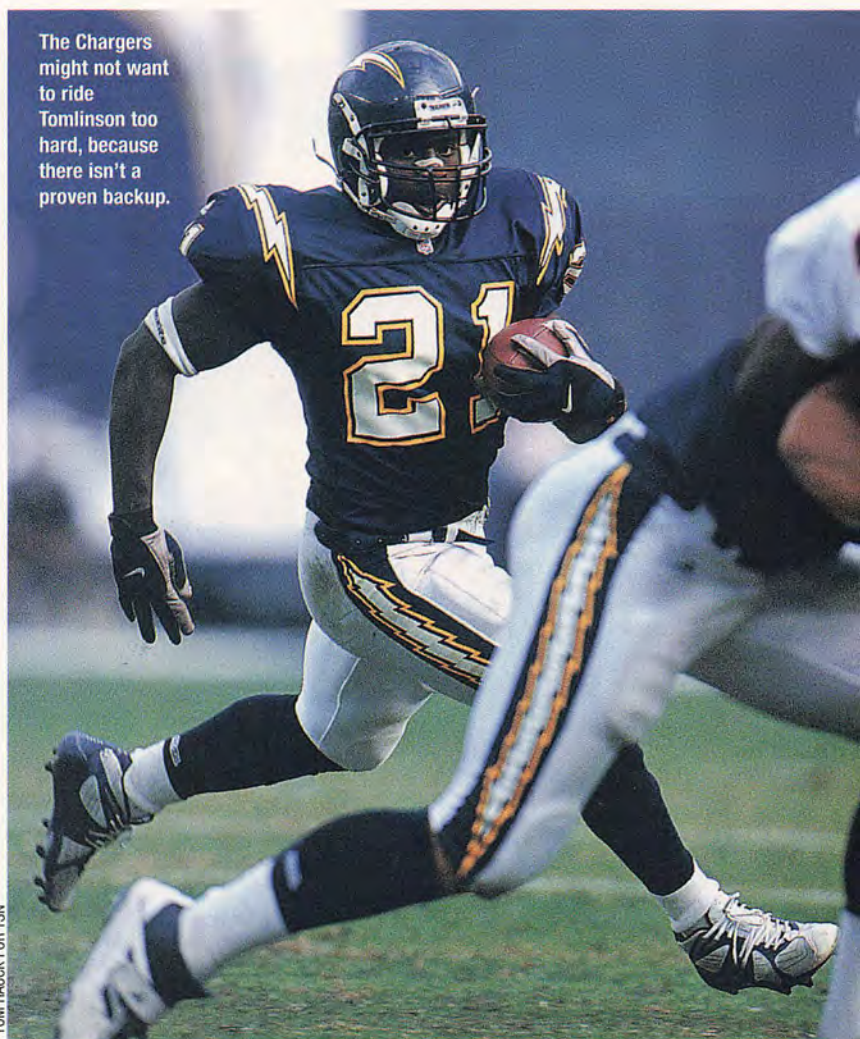
Line coach Hudson Houck will oversee the running game. He expects his unit to be physical and smart, though it may be a year or two before he has the personnel to maximize his schemes.

Style—When assembling his staff, Schottenheimer stressed that he wanted assistants who were good teachers. He succeeded, particularly on defense, where Lindsey, assistant head coach Bill Arnsparger and defensive line coach Wayne Nunnely are respected technicians. Each is patient but demanding.

Schottenheimer is unquestionably the motivator on the staff. He has told the players he will demand that they play hard, play smart and be in shape. He also informed them that he won't play favorites. Everyone will be coached, from the undrafted rookie

The Chargers might not want to ride Tomlinson too hard, because there isn't a proven backup.

TOM HAUCK FOR TSN



trying to make the 53-man roster to 11-time Pro Bowl linebacker Junior Seau.

Schottenheimer's no-nonsense approach has been welcomed by many of the veterans, who privately admitted the team needed a kick in the rear after three seasons under easy-going coach Mike Riley. **GRADE: A-**

OFFENSE Quarterbacks—Doug

Flutie was the envy of every veteran quarterback last season. He could throw an interception, miss a read or lose a fumble—sometimes all in the same game—and never have to worry about losing his starting job.

That's not the case this season. In fact, the starting job isn't Flutie's heading into training camp. Or anyone else's, for that matter. Schottenheimer says he'll decide on a starter

during the exhibition season. In the meantime, he'll give Flutie and second-year pro Drew Brees equal playing time with the first team in practice and exhibition games.

Flutie, who turns 40 in October, was good and bad in starting all 16 games last season. He passed for an NFL career-high 3,464 yards, but he threw more interceptions (18) than touchdown passes (15) and lost the respect of some teammates when he failed to accept his share of the blame for a nine-game losing streak. Fifteen of his interceptions came during that skid.

Brees was outstanding in his only action as a rookie. When Flutie was knocked out of a game against the Chiefs with a concussion, Brees rallied the Chargers from 19 down to one up late in the fourth quarter. The defense ended up blowing the lead in a 25-20 loss, but there was no mistaking the promise of Brees, who was 15-of-27 passing for 221 yards, one touchdown and no interceptions.

If Brees builds on that performance in the preseason, the Chargers will have a new starting quarterback. Brees is not as fleet-footed as Flutie, but he has good mobility in the pocket and great anticipation skills that allow him to see the holes in the defense before they develop. **GRADE: C+**

Running backs—LaDainian Tomlinson is looking to build on a strong rookie season in which he became the first Charger in seven years to rush for 1,000 yards. He finished with 1,236 yards despite an inconsistent line and stacked defenses.

Tomlinson possesses excellent speed and moves and has good lower-body strength. The Chargers tried to bring him along slowly in the passing game, but he wound up second on the team with 59 catches. He could get more time in passing situations this season, though Terrell Fletcher is a solid third-down back.

The new coaching staff will decide as it goes how long and how hard to ride Tomlinson, who was a workhorse last season. He carried 36 times in his pro debut and finished with 339 rushes, four shy of the franchise record. Schottenheimer is known for making heavy use of his feature back, but that could prove dangerous with the Chargers because Tomlinson has no proven backup. Ronney Jenkins (5-11, 188) has excellent speed and quickness but isn't built for the power-running game Schottenheimer prefers.

Fullback Fred McCrary is one of the best blocking backs in the league and should fit well in Schottenheimer's scheme. **GRADE: B**

Receivers—Curtis Conway is looking to record back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons for the first time since accomplishing the feat with the Bears in 1995-96. The key will be staying healthy. He has had three 1,000-yard seasons in his nine-year career, and each occurred in seasons in which he started all 16 games.

The team released starter Jeff Graham in

2002 draft picks

Rd.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	
1-5	Quentin Jammer	DB	Texas	Physical corner who can play both the run and the pass.
2-39	Toniu Fonoti	G	Nebraska	Dominant run blocker who needs to improve as a pass protector.
2-48	Reche Caldwell	WR	Florida	Playmaker who excels after the catch.
3-71	Ben Leber	LB	Kansas State	Expected to contribute immediately on special teams.
4-103	Justin Peelle	TE	Oregon	Has good size and hands but lacks ideal speed.
5-142	Terry Charles	WR	Portland State	Can a dominant I-AA player make the big step up?
6-178	Matt Anderle	OT	Minnesota	Has large frame and good feet but needs to add bulk.
7-216	Seth Burford	QB	Cal Poly-SLO	Could develop into Drew Brees' backup in a year or two.

Previous five first rounds

Yr.-Pick	Name	Pos.	School	Status
'97	None			
'98-2	Ryan Leaf	QB	Washington State	Backup with Cowboys
'99	None			
'00	None			
'01-5	LaDainian Tomlinson	RB	TCU	Starter with Chargers

A SCOUT BREAKS DOWN

The biggest question heading into the season is: Who will be the quarterback? **Doug Flutie** ignited the team early last year and led it to some impressive victories, but he struggled later. **Drew Brees** looked capable in limited action as a rookie. **Marty Schottenheimer** says the competition is open going into camp, but look for Brees to win a tough race that will last until the opening of the season. ... **LaDainian Tomlinson** will be a key element in the run-oriented style of offense that Marty likes. He is a huge talent capable of carrying an offense. ... The offensive line was a big concern in the off-season. **Bob Hallen** was signed in free agency and **Toni Fomonoti** was drafted in the second round. Look for both to start at the guard positions. Fomonoti is a

OUTSIDE



THE CHARGERS

powerful run blocker who fits Schottenheimer's style. ... The defense will again be led by **Junior Seau** and **Rodney Harrison**. Seau is as disruptive as ever and Harrison arguably is the best safety in the game. Look for **Jamal Williams**, who was hurt last year, to be the inside anchor on the line in the wake of **John Parrella's** departure to Oakland. **Quentin Jammer**, their top draft pick, fills a definite need at corner. **Alex Molden** was a bit of a disappointment last year. I think Jammer will team up with **Ryan McNeil** as the starters, and Molden and **Tay Cody** will battle for the third spot. ... They gave **Tim Dwight** a \$5 million signing bonus. Look for **Tamarick Vanover** to take over the return duties as Dwight's role with the offense increases.

the offseason and promoted No. 3 wideout **Tim Dwight** to the starting lineup. Dwight brings more speed and big-play ability—22 of his 25 receptions last season went for first downs—but he must show he can be productive as a starter and stay healthy.

Dwight missed at least four games because of injuries in three of his first four seasons. Last year, he missed six games with broken ribs and a collapsed lung. If he stays healthy, he figures to be worth every penny of the \$15 million contract he received this offseason. If he doesn't, the offense could be in trouble.

There is no accomplished depth behind Dwight and Conway. Third-year pro **Trevor Gaylor** has started five games and has some

downfield potential, but he's not ready for full-time duty, and defenses have figured out that he can be thrown off his game with physical, bump-and-run coverage. Gaylor will compete against second-round pick **Reche Caldwell** for the No. 3 receiver job. Caldwell has good hands and route-running ability but lacks blazing speed. Fifth-round pick **Terry Charles** tore his left ACL in minicamp, and **Tamarick Vanover** hasn't played in an NFL game in two years because of legal problems. When he did play, he was known more for his return skills than his receiving abilities.

The Chargers have moved Conway from flanker to split end, the position Graham played the previous three seasons. Whether he will be asked to do the dirty work over the middle that Graham did remains to be seen. It's more likely the Chargers will stretch defenses with the speed of Conway and Dwight and let the tight ends work the routes underneath.

Free-agent signee **Stephen Alexander** replaces **Freddie Jones** at tight end, but it's debatable whether that's an upgrade. The players have the same type of speed and hands, but Jones is a better blocker. Alexander is coming off a season in which he caught just nine passes and missed nine games because of an ankle injury. He must produce for the offense to be effective. **GRADE: B-**

Line—The Chargers' priority was to upgrade the interior of the line after failing repeatedly in short-yardage situations. But the additions of center **Cory Raymer** and guards **Bob Hallen** and **Toni Fomonoti** don't figure to make a dramatic difference.

Raymer, a free-agent pickup from the Redskins, is a solid pro, but knee surgeries have robbed him of some of his quickness and agility. The Chargers tried to re-sign **Kendyl Jacox**, who started all 16 games at center last season, but he rejected their \$10 million offer and moved on. At best, the loss

of Jacox and the signing of **Raymer** is a wash.

Hallen has some athleticism, but the Falcons benched him late last season and replaced him with a rookie. He is more serviceable than spectacular and figures to be no better at left guard than the man he replaces, **Raleigh Roundtree**, who wasn't re-signed.

Fomonoti, a second-round pick, has tremendous size and potential. At 6-4, 349, he's a human office building who arguably was the best run-blocking

guard in college last season. But he's a rookie, so he's going to make mistakes. He needs to bone up on pass protection after playing three years in Nebraska's option-oriented attack.

The plan is to play Fomonoti on the right side, where he can work next to nine-year tackle

Vaughn Parker, the team's best offensive lineman. Fomonoti played left guard in college, but the Chargers were concerned about pairing him with left tackle **Damion McIntosh**, a third-year pro with only 14 career starts. The fear was that the left side would be a target for opponents. But by playing Fomonoti on the right and Hallen (31 starts) on the left, the team has a balance of experience on both sides.

The starters must stay healthy because there is no proven depth behind them. The team still is searching for a backup center, and it doesn't have a reserve who has started even one game at guard. **GRADE: D**

DEFENSE Line—The unit was weakened by Parrella's departure, but the signing of free-agent tackle **Jason Fisk** and

NICKEL PACKAGE

Five things to look for:

1. QB **Doug Flutie** won't need **Geritol**, but he will need a baseball cap. **Drew Brees** will win the starting job and won't surrender it unless he's injured.
2. The defense allowed the winning score in the final three minutes of regulation or in overtime in 14 games the past two seasons. That won't be a problem this season, with an upgrade in talent and some of the game's best defensive minds on staff.
3. **Tim Dwight** will miss at least four games if he returns punts and starts at wideout. His biggest asset—his fearlessness—is also his biggest liability.
4. The Chargers will avoid a five-game losing streak for the first time in six years. In the past five seasons, they've had skids of eight, five, six, 11 and nine games.
5. **Marty Schottenheimer** will suffer his second losing season as a head coach.



Dwight

2001 results

Sept. 9	WASHINGTON	W	30-3
Sept. 23	at Dallas	W	32-21
Sept. 30	CINCINNATI	W	28-14
Oct. 7	at Cleveland	L	16-20
Oct. 14	at N.E. (OT)	L	26-29
Oct. 21	DENVER	W	27-10
Oct. 28	BUFFALO	W	27-24
Nov. 4	KANSAS CITY	L	20-25
Nov. 11	at Denver	L	16-26
Nov. 18	at Oakland	L	24-34
Nov. 25	ARIZONA	L	17-20
Dec. 2	at Seattle (OT)	L	10-13
Dec. 9	at Philadelphia	L	14-24
Dec. 15	OAKLAND	L	6-13
Dec. 23	at Kansas City	L	17-20
Dec. 30	SEATTLE	L	22-25
Jan. 6	Open date		

Moves

Key additions

TE Stephen Alexander	Free agent/Redskins
LB Donnie Edwards	Free agent/Chiefs
DT Jason Fisk	Free agent/Titans
G Bob Hallen	Free agent/Falcons
C Cory Raymer	Free agent/Redskins
KR Tamarick Vanover	Free agent

Key losses

LB Gerald Dixon	Free agent/Raiders
G DeMingo Graham	Free agent/Texans
WR Jeff Graham	Free agent/Falcons
LB John Holecek	Free agent/Falcons
C Kendyl Jacox	Free agent
TE Freddie Jones	Free agent/Cardinals
DL Mike Mohring	Free agent/Raiders
DT John Parrella	Free agent/Raiders

Stadium/Media

Qualcomm Stadium (71,000, grass).

Ticket information: 619-280-2121.

Training site: UC San Diego, La Jolla, Calif.; 858-455-1976.

Radio: KFMB-AM (760), STAR-FM (100.7).

Website: www.chargers.com

Records

2001 regular-season record: 5-11 (5th in AFC West); 1-7 in division; 3-9 in conference; 2-2 vs. NFC; 4-4 at home; 1-7 on road; 1-2 on artificial turf; 4-9 on grass.

2001 playoff record: None.

Marty Schottenheimer's regular-season record: First season with Chargers; 153-93-1 overall in 16 seasons with Redskins, Chiefs and original Cleveland Browns.

Schottenheimer's postseason record: 5-11 in 11 appearances with Chiefs and Browns.

Team record last five years: 23-57 (.288, ranks 30th in league in that span).

Last time made playoffs: 1995.

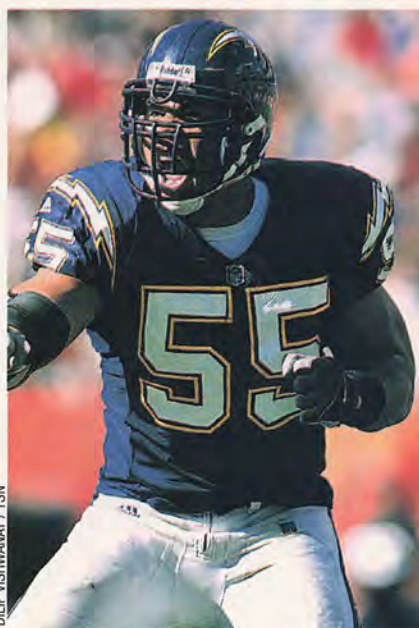
Rankings

	No.	AFC	NFL
Total offense	*325.0	6	11
Rushing offense	*105.9	11	20
Passing offense	*219.1	5	11
Scoring offense	332	8	14
Total defense	*306.5	6	11
Rushing defense	*94.0	5	7
Passing defense	*212.5	11	20
Scoring defense	321	9	T16
Takeaways	31	5	T3
Giveaways	29	9	T17
Turnover differential	2	7	T13
Sacks	41	T6	T13
Sacks allowed	27	T2	T5

*Yards per game

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	NFL yrs.	Yrs. on team
Marty Schottenheimer	Head coach	17	1
Bill Arnsparger	Assoc. HC/defense	26	1
Cam Cameron	Off. coordinator	4	1
Dale Lindsey	Def. coordinator	16	6
Tim Brewster	Tight ends	1	1
Pete Carmichael	Off. asst./quality cont.	3	1
Steve Crosby	Special teams	18	1
Jerry Holmes	Defensive backs	4	1
Hudson Houck	Offensive line	20	1
James Lofton	Wide receivers	1	1
Greg Manusky	Linebackers	2	1
Wayne Nunnely	Defensive line	8	6
John Pagano	Def. assistant/QC	7	1
Joe Pascale	Special projects	17	6
Dave Redding	Strength & cond.	18	1
Matt Schiotz	Assistant strength	4	1
Brian Schottenheimer	Quarterbacks	4	1
Clarence Shelmon	Running backs	12	1



DILIP VISHWANATH / TSN

As his career winds down, Seau continues to work hard out of fear of being viewed as average.

the return of run-stopping tackle Jamal Williams from knee surgery should make the Chargers tough inside. Neither is known for his pass-rushing skills—Williams relies primarily on bull rushes and brute strength, while Fisk is quicker and focuses on gap control—but that doesn't make either a liability in the scheme, which is focused on stopping the run.

The pass rushing will be left to ends Marcellus Wiley and Raylee Johnson in non-blitzing situations. Wiley went to the Pro Bowl last season; Johnson should have been right there with him. The two combined for 22½ sacks, with Wiley recording a career-high 13. It's not implausible the pair could combine for 30 sacks this year, considering Wiley was hampered last season by the pain of a screw holding together his fractured left foot. And Johnson figures to improve with a year under his belt after missing the 2000 season with a torn ACL.

Al Fontenot and Adrian Dingle provide depth, but neither is as accomplished a pass rusher as Wiley or Johnson. Fontenot is a solid run defender who plays with discipline and intelligence. Dingle has more pass-rushing ability but is not as fundamentally sound as the others. **GRADE: A-**

Linebackers—The Chargers wanted more speed at this position and added Edwards, a former Chiefs standout who is one of the quickest linebackers in the league. Edwards, who had at least 100 tackles in each of the last five seasons, will start on the strong side, where he is equally effective in coverage and blitzing. He was frustrated last season because he spent more time reading than reacting in the Chiefs' scheme, but the Chargers have promised to turn him loose and give him more chances to attack the quarterback.

Seau returns on the weak side. He is nearing the end of an illustrious career but hasn't slowed yet. He works hard because his biggest fear is being viewed as average, and the arrival of Edwards figures to push him even harder because there will be a friendly competition to see who can make more plays.

Orlando Ruff has started in the middle the past two seasons, but management is expecting a fierce battle between him and second-year player Carlos Polk. Polk missed much of last season with a rotator-cuff injury, but he's healthy and eager to compete for a starting spot. **GRADE: B**

Secondary—This should be a strong point for the defense. Cornerback Ryan McNeil went to the Pro Bowl last season after intercepting eight passes; first-round pick Jammer was touted as the best cornerback in this year's draft; free safety Rogers Beckett is an up-and-comer; and Rodney Harrison is a premier strong safety.

The scheme calls for the secondary to be physical and aggressive. The corners will be asked to press receivers at the line of scrimmage, and the safeties will be more involved in the blitz package. Harrison also might be given more freedom to play against the run. Last year, the Chargers asked him to do more reading than reacting because they were so young in the secondary, with rookie Tay Cody starting at one corner and Beckett in his first full season as a starter.

Alex Molden, who missed 10 games last season because of injuries, is hoping to hold off Jammer for a starting spot, but the odds aren't in his favor. San Diego did not use the fifth overall pick on Jammer with the idea of keeping him on the bench.

The more interesting battle could be between Molden and Cody in the nickel package.

Cody beat out Molden for the starting job last season even before Molden had season-ending ankle surgery. Cody gave up a couple of big plays because of communication breakdowns, but he has the confidence and physical skills to be an excellent nickel defender. The only knocks on him as an every-down player are his lack of size (5-9, 180) and over-the-top speed. In nickel situations, he will be matched against No. 3 wideouts in the slot. **GRADE: B**

SPECIAL TEAMS

This should be one of the club's stronger areas. Jenkins led the league in kickoff-return average last year; Dwight was fifth in the AFC in punt-return average; Darren Bennett remains one of the league's best punters; and David Binn is an accomplished long snapper.

The problem is at kicker. Wade Richey missed 11 of 32 field-goal attempts last season before being demoted. Nine of the missed kicks were from 46 yards or closer, and five were from 38 yards and in.

Steve Christie, a late-season addition, was re-signed in the offseason to handle kicks

REALIGNMENT reality

Realignment wasn't kind to the Chargers. Instead of enjoying a fifth-place schedule, they must play non-division games against both of last season's Super Bowl teams—the Patriots at home, the Rams on the road—as well as face three 2001 playoff teams: the 49ers, Dolphins and Jets. One positive is that Seattle has moved to the NFC West. San Diego had lost four in a row and eight of 10 to the Seahawks, who probably would have challenged for the AFC West title. With them gone, the Raiders are favored to make it three straight division crowns, though age and a new coach could make them vulnerable. The Broncos upgraded on offense, but the Chargers believe the upgrades they made on defense will help their cause. The wild card is the Chiefs, who started slowly but finished on a high note last year under coach Dick Vermeil. Kansas City has won four of five from the Chargers.



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

Brees, outstanding in limited action as a rookie, will give Flutie a run for the starting job.

from 45 yards and closer. For longer kicks, the team probably will go with Richey, who has a powerful leg but little control. The fact that he led the league in touchbacks last season and is guaranteed \$400,000 this year may be the only reasons he still is with the team.

Meantime, Vanover could be a wild card in the return game. He ranked third in the league in punt-return average in 1999. The Chargers are hoping he wins the punt-return job so they won't have to subject Dwight to unnecessary hits. **GRADE: B**

BOTTOM LINE Schottenheimer will point the Chargers in the right direction. Without question, they will be more disciplined and more fundamentally sound. But a lack of depth at key positions, an unforgiving schedule and the likelihood of inconsistent play from the offensive line add up to a seventh straight year out of the playoffs.

TSN

Jim Trotter covers the Chargers for the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Projected depth chart

Offense

WR	● Curtis Conway
	□ Trevor Gaylor
LT	□ Damien McIntosh
	■ Vaughn Parker
LG	□ Bob Hallen
	□ Elliot Silvers
C	■ Cory Rayment
	□ Craig Osika
RG	■ Toniu Fonoti
	□ Ed Ellis
RT	● Vaughn Parker
	□ Ed Ellis
TE	■ Stephen Alexander
	■ Steve Heiden
WR	■ Tim Dwight
	■ Reche Caldwell
QB	■ Drew Brees
	■ Doug Flutie
RB	● LaDainian Tomlinson
	■ Terrell Fletcher
FB	■ Fred McCrary
	□ Joey Goodspeed

Defense

LE	● Marcellus Wiley
	■ Al Fontenot
LT	■ Jamal Williams
	■ Leonardo Carson
RT	■ Jason Fisk
	□ DeQuincy Scott
RE	● Raylee Johnson
	■ Adrian Dingle
WLB	● Junior Seau
	■ Zeke Moreno
MLB	■ Orlando Ruff
	■ Carlos Polk
SLB	● Donnie Edwards
	■ Sam Rogers
LCB	■ Quentin Jammer
	■ Alex Molden
RCB	■ Ryan McNeil
	■ Tay Cody
SS	● Rodney Harrison
	□ Robert Carswell
FS	■ Rogers Beckett
	□ Jason Perry
Specialists	
K	□ Wade Richey
P	● Darren Bennett
KR	■ Tamarick Vanover
PR	■ Tamarick Vanover
LS	● David Binn
	● Can play for any team
	■ Solid player
	□ Fringe player

CHARGERS ROSTER

No.	Name	HT/WT	Born	NFL exp.	College	How acq.	2001 GP/GS
Quarterbacks							
9	Brees, Drew	6-0/221	1-15-79	2	Purdue	D2/01	1/0
	Burford, Seth	6-3/241	3-11-79	R	Cal Poly	D7/02	—
7	Flutie, Doug	5-10/180	10-23-62	9	Boston College	FA/00	16/16
Running backs							
41	Fletcher, Terrell	5-8/196	9-14-73	8	Wisconsin	D2b/95	13/0
28	Jenkins, Ronney	5-11/188	5-25-77	3	Northern Arizona	FA/00	16/0
44	McCrary, Fred (FB)	6-0/235	9-19-72	6	Mississippi State	FA/99	16/12
21	Tomlinson, LaDainian	5-10/221	6-23-79	2	Texas Christian	D1/01	16/16
48	Witherspoon, Terry (FB)	5-11/250	8-22-77	2	Clemson	W-Dal/02	3/0
Receivers							
	Alexander, Stephen (TE)	6-4/246	11-7-75	5	Oklahoma	UFA/02	7/5
86	Batteaux, Patrick	6-0/195	4-18-78	2	Texas Christian	FA/01	5/0
	Caldwell, Reche	5-11/194	3-28-79	R	Florida	D2b/02	—
	Charles, Terry	6-3/197	7-8-79	R	Portland State	D5/02	—
80	Conway, Curtis	6-1/196	3-13-71	10	Southern California	UFA/00	16/16
85	Dwight, Tim	5-9/180	7-13-75	5	Iowa	T-Atl/01	10/2
82	Gaylor, Trevor	6-3/195	11-3-77	3	Miami of Ohio	D4a/00	7/3
83	Heiden, Steve (TE)	6-5/270	9-21-76	4	South Dakota State	FA/99	16/9
	Peelle, Justin (TE)	6-4/255	3-15-79	R	Oregon	D4/02	—
6	Turner, Nate	6-3/210	5-26-78	1	UNLV	FA/01	1/0
84	Whitman, Josh (TE)	6-4/252	8-5-78	2	Illinois	FA/01	4/1
Offensive linemen							
	Anderle, Matt (T)	6-8/315	2-14-79	R	Minnesota	D6/02	—
50	Binn, David (C)	6-3/245	2-6-72	9	California	FA/94	16/0
69	Ellis, Ed (T)	6-7/325	10-13-75	5	Buffalo	UFA/01	16/2
	Fonoti, Toniu (G)	6-4/349	11-26-81	R	Nebraska	D2a/02	—
64	Hallen, Bob (G)	6-4/305	3-9-75	5	Kent	UFA/02	15/12
61	Keathley, Michael (G)	6-4/296	3-9-78	2	Texas Christian	FA/01	16/0
77	McIntosh, Damien (T)	6-4/325	3-25-77	3	Kansas State	D3/00	15/14
70	Parker, Vaughn (T)	6-3/300	6-5-71	9	UCLA	D2b/94	16/16
68	Silvers, Elliot (T)	6-7/320	2-19-78	1	Washington	D5a/01	2/0
Defensive linemen							
96	Carson, Leonardo (T)	6-2/285	2-11-77	3	Auburn	D4b/00	16/13
90	Dingle, Adrian (E)	6-3/272	6-25-77	4	Clemson	D5a/99	14/0
97	Fisk, Jason (T)	6-3/295	9-4-72	7	Stanford	UFA/99	16/16
95	Fontenot, Al (E)	6-4/287	9-17-70	10	Baylor	FA/99	16/2
99	Johnson, Raylee (E)	6-3/272	6-1-70	9	Arkansas	D4a/93	16/16
75	Wiley, Marcellus (E)	6-4/275	11-30-74	6	Columbia	UFA/01	14/14
76	Williams, Jamal (T)	6-3/305	4-28-76	5	Oklahoma State	SD-2/98	3/3
Linebackers							
	Edwards, Donnie	6-2/227	4-6-73	7	UCLA	FA/02	16/16
53	Humphrey, Deon	6-3/240	5-7-76	3	Florida State	FA/00	11/0
	Leber, Ben	6-3/244	12-7-78	R	Kansas State	D3/02	—
57	Moreno, Zeke	6-2/246	10-10-78	2	Southern California	D5b/01	16/0
52	Polk, Carlos	6-2/250	2-22-77	R	Nebraska	D4/01	6/0
59	Rogers, Sam	6-3/245	5-30-70	9	Colorado	FA/01	15/0
56	Ruff, Orlando	6-3/250	9-28-76	4	Furman	FA/99	16/14
55	Seau, Junior	6-3/250	1-19-69	13	Southern California	D1/90	16/16
Defensive backs							
42	Beckett, Rogers (S)	6-3/205	1-31-77	3	Marshall	D2/00	16/16
30	Carswell, Robert (S)	5-11/215	10-26-78	2	Clemson	D7b/01	16/0
27	Cody, Tay (CB)	5-9/180	10-6-77	2	Florida State	D3/01	14/11
22	Harrison, Lloyd (CB)	5-10/190	6-21-77	2	North Carolina State	W-Was/01	12/1
37	Harrison, Rodney (S)	6-1/218	12-15-72	9	Western Illinois	D5b/94	14/14
	Jammer, Quentin (CB)	5-11/204	6-19-79	R	Texas	D1/02	—
47	McNeil, Ryan (CB)	6-2/192	10-4-70	10	Miami (Fla.)	FA/01	16/16
25	Molden, Alex (CB)	5-10/190	8-4-73	7	Oregon	UFA/01	6/3
31	Perry, Jason (S)	6-0/200	8-1-76	3	North Carolina State	D4/99	14/3
33	Sanchez, Davis	5-10/190	8-7-74	2	Oregon	FA/01	12/2
Specialists							
2	Bennett, Darren (P)	6-5/235	1-9-65	8	None	FA/94	16/0
8	Christie, Steve (K)	6-0/195	11-13-67	13	William & Mary	FA/01	5/0
5	Richey, Wade (K)	6-3/205	5-19-76	5	Louisiana State	FA/01	16/0

Other free-agent veterans invited to camp: CB Dave Dickenson, OT Brandon Gorin, WR Tamarick Vanover.

Abbreviations: D1—draft pick, first round; W—claimed on waivers; T—obtained in trade; FA—free-agent acquisition; UFA—unconditional free-agent acquisition.

The War Room's 2003 NFL Draft Preview

QUARTERBACKS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Byron Leftwich, Marshall	6-6/240	Clearly the top-rated quarterback after he began to maximize his talent in junior season.
Dave Ragone, Louisville	6-4/255	Some scouts say he has more potential than former teammate Chris Redman.
Rex Grossman*, Florida	6-1/220	Put up Heisman-type numbers last season, but how much will he miss Steve Spurrier?
Chris Simms, Texas	6-5/225	Not the most popular player after losing job to Major Applewhite; can he bounce back?
Ken Dorsey, Miami (Fla.)	6-5/200	He has done it all at the college level but will need to bulk up for the NFL.
Carson Palmer, USC	6-5/225	Big-name college quarterback has yet to live up to his billing.
Kliff Kingsbury, Texas Tech	6-4/208	Early Heisman talk has helped to draw attention from NFL officials.
Jason Thomas, UNLV	6-4/230	Has Donovan McNabb-like natural tools, but took a huge step back with disappointing junior season.
Chris Lewis*, Stanford	6-3/215	Took over late last season for Randy Fasani and could be a real surprise for the Cardinal this fall.
Seneca Wallace, Iowa State	5-10/193	Athletic playmaker will only get better with more experience.

RUNNING BACKS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
LaBrandon Toefield*, LSU	6-0/225	Would not have been a top pick in 2002, but running back class is weak in '03.
Lee Suggs, Virginia Tech	6-0/201	Has most potential in this group but has to prove he can bounce back from season-ending knee injury.
Dwone Hicks, Middle Tennessee State	5-11/225	Small-school back has the size and power to make a big impact this fall.
Dahrran Diedrick, Nebraska	6-0/225	An explosive runner, but scouts have become increasingly wary of Nebraska backs.
Dontae Walker, Mississippi State	5-10/225	Should benefit from carrying the full load this season now that Dicens Miller is gone.
Julius Jones, Notre Dame	5-10/200	Has flashed ability, but Jones has to prove he can be the man every down.
Cedric Cobbs*, Arkansas	6-1/221	Roller-coaster college career needs to end on a high note in order for him to get drafted.
Marcus Houston**, Colorado	6-2/205	NFL officials worry that he spends too much time with off-field responsibilities.
Earnest Graham, Florida	5-9/215	Third-down back extraordinaire seems like a good fit in the middle rounds.
Sultan McCullough, USC	6-0/190	He's loaded with straight-line speed, but is he too "straight line"?

WIDE RECEIVERS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Roy Williams*, Texas	6-4/210	Has Randy Moss-type skills without the attitude and baggage.
Kelley Washington**, Tennessee	6-4/225	Burst onto the national scene as a 23-year-old freshman after abandoning baseball career.
Charles Rogers*, Michigan State	6-4/200	Tall, explosive receiver likely will leave early and could be a first-round selection.
Andre Johnson*, Miami (Fla.)	6-3/212	Emerged as the top playmaker on last season's national champion team.
Brandon Lloyd*, Illinois	6-2/180	A bit inconsistent but has a knack for making big plays downfield.
Bernard Berrian, Fresno State	6-2/190	Explosive receiver and return specialist could see numbers drop without David Carr.
Justin Gage, Missouri	6-4/210	Basketball/football standout has ideal athleticism for his height.
B.J. Johnson*, Texas	6-1/200	Overshadowed by teammate Roy Williams but still a good player in his own right.
Darius Watts*, Marshall	6-2/183	Has a chance to ride QB Byron Leftwich's Heisman campaign all the way to the draft.
Billy McMullen, Virginia	6-4/205	A tall, physical receiver who hasn't reached full potential yet.
Kareem Kelly, USC	6-0/190	Once thought of as a top prospect but must bounce back from disappointing junior year.

TIGHT ENDS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Aaron Walker, Florida	6-6/261	Lacks great blocking experience but has ideal size and receiving skills.
Trent Smith, Oklahoma	6-5/230	Consistent in the passing game and efficient blocker in college but needs to bulk up some.
Bo Scaife*, Texas	6-3/250	Flashed ability as a receiver but needs to become a more consistent threat.
Mobolaji Afariogun, Western Michigan	6-4/238	Undersized tight end with good receiving numbers, but only so many H-backs make it in the NFL.
Doug Zeigler, Mississippi	6-4/254	Could be the surprise of this class if he continues to improve his receiving skills.

OFFENSIVE TACKLES

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Brett Williams, Florida State	6-6/317	Big, strongside tackle might be a little overrated because of size and school.
Ben Johnson, Wisconsin	6-7/321	Looks a lot like top prospect Mike Williams last year, but feet still need work.
Tony Pashos, Illinois	6-6/320	A technically sound prospect who really improved his pass-blocking skills as a junior.
Jake Kuppe, Minnesota	6-7/352	Massive tackle has a lot of upside but doesn't move well enough right now.
Makoa Freitas, Arizona	6-4/304	Will flash the feet of a NFL left tackle but is inconsistent.
Jon Stinchcomb, Georgia	6-6/277	Comes from a nice lineage, but this Stinchcomb needs to add some bulk and strength.
Steve Sciuillo, Marshall	6-6/344	Still a bit raw but improved his feet in pass protection last year; has a lot of upside.

GUARDS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Montrae Holland, Florida State	6-3/325	Can be a dominating run blocker, and his footwork has improved every year.
Torrin Tucker, Southern Mississippi	6-6/316	Has great size and might even project as a tackle in the NFL.
Marc Parenteau, Boston College	6-5/308	A nasty interior blocker with good—but not great—natural tools.
Cedric Williams, South Carolina	6-3/300	Athletic for an interior blocker but will need to add some bulk and strength.
Kevin Breedlove, Georgia	6-4/305	Adding some size and becoming more consistent are two of his biggest challenges.

CENTERS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Jeff Faine, Notre Dame	6-3/298	Has the intelligence, quickness and technique to emerge as the top center.
Al Johnson, Wisconsin	6-4/295	Has tremendous raw talent and can be overwhelming as a run blocker when he reaches his target.
Ben Claxton, Mississippi	6-3/288	A quick, feisty player, but it's safe to say he's an overachiever.

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
William Joseph, Miami (Fla.)	6-5/282	Could become the No.1 overall pick in the draft if he continues to develop.
Jimmy Kennedy, Penn State	6-5/330	A massive two-gap tackle in the mold of Sam Adams.
Cedric Harden, Missouri	6-3/306	Flashes potential of becoming a disruptive all-around tackle, but consistency is a concern.
Eric Manning, Oregon State	6-1/295	Has some one-gap penetration skills, but height might cost him on draft day.
Jarret Johnson, Alabama	6-4/287	Should benefit from playing on a line with Kenny King and Kindal Moorehead.
Marcus Tubbs*, Texas	6-4/305	Flashed a lot of ability last year in two-gap scheme and might be ready after junior year.
Ty Warren, Texas A&M	6-4/308	Has good size and does a nice job of using his hands to disengage and chase.

DEFENSIVE ENDS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Kenny King, Alabama	6-5/277	Has ideal combination of size and athleticism and will benefit from playing on a very talented line.
Jerome McDougal, Miami (Fla.)	6-2/260	Hasn't reached full potential but has good size and a quick first step off the edge.
Kindal Moorehead, Alabama	6-4/304	A 'tweener end/tackle but has tremendous upside.
Cory Redding, Texas	6-5/270	A pass rusher with good upfield burst but needs to add bulk.
Kai Ellis, Washington	6-4/245	Has a great first step and closing speed to the quarterback, but he's a one-dimensional player at this point.
Chris Kelsay, Nebraska	6-5/255	Not an explosive rusher or a big run-stuffer, but he's always involved in the play.
Greg Gathers, Georgia Tech	6-1/275	One of the nation's top pass rushers returns to prove he's more than a one-dimensional end.

INSIDE LINEBACKERS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
E.J. Henderson, Maryland	6-2/250	Would have been a high first-round pick if he had left after junior year—just needs to stay healthy now.
Mario Haggan, Mississippi State	6-3/253	Explosive, unrefined player made the right decision by returning for senior season.
Matt Wilhelm, Ohio State	6-5/245	An overachieving inside linebacker with good size and strength but limited athleticism.
Solomon Bates, Arizona State	6-2/261	Can really move for his size, but his technique and consistency are concerns.
Brian Gamble, Texas A&M	6-2/225	An undersized inside linebacker with great range, but look where that got LSU's Trev Faulk last year.

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Eddie Strong, Mississippi	6-4/245	Versatile and extremely athletic for his size but correctly decided to come back for senior year.
Lance Briggs, Arizona	6-1/230	An explosive linebacker with some upfield qualities, but size is a problem.
Bradie James, LSU	6-3/238	Makes plays sideline-to-sideline but needs to add some bulk and strength.
Victor Hobson, Michigan	6-1/244	A tough, hard-nosed linebacker with adequate athleticism.
Michael Adams, Stephen F. Austin	6-3/230	Small-school end must make move to outside linebacker in the NFL.
Terrell Suggs*, Arizona State	6-3/232	An up-and-coming playmaker in the Pac-10 but might be best served to return for final year.
Clifton Smith, Syracuse	6-3/263	Developed into a consistent run stopper as a junior and should get more attention this year.
Boss Bailey, Georgia	6-4/218	A tremendous athlete for a linebacker, but size is a real concern.

SAFETIES

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Mike Doss, Ohio State	5-11/204	Was overshadowed by last year's tremendous safety class but is the cream of this year's crop.
Terrence Holt, North Carolina State	6-2/203	Brother of Rams receiver is a fine athlete at free safety—and also a proven punt blocker.
Troy Polamalu, USC	5-10/215	Former linebacker developed into another Pac-10 version of Adam Archuleta last year.
Todd Johnson, Florida	6-1/201	Overshadowed by Marquand Manuel and Lito Sheppard last year but should make his mark as a senior.
Anthony Floyd, Louisville	5-10/200	Has great potential as a versatile safety but needs to improve technique and overall consistency.

CORNERBACKS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Dennis Weathersby, Oregon State	6-1/206	Tall with playmaking skills and should emerge as the top corner in this class.
Marcus Trufant, Washington State	6-0/190	One of WSU's career interception leaders will look to add to his total as a senior.
Eugene Wilson, Illinois	5-11/183	One of the top playmakers at the cornerback position last year; can he do it again?
Terence Newman, Kansas State	5-11/185	Has good size and great speed but still makes too many mistakes in coverage.
Sammy Davis, Texas A&M	6-0/185	Has good height and speed but is a bit slender; will need to become more physical in coverage.

KICKERS

Player, College	Ht./Wt.	Comment
Jonathan Ruffin, Cincinnati (K)	5-10/183	Should emerge as one of the nation's most efficient kickers this year.
Jarad Preston, East Carolina (P)	5-11/202	Has a big leg and a huge upside but needs to show some consistency in final season.

NOTE: All heights and weights according to college team. * 2002 junior. ** 2002 sophomore.

PRESEASON

(All times are Eastern)

Hall of Fame weekend

Saturday, August 3

Washington vs. San Francisco at
Osaka, Japan 10:00

Monday, August 5

Houston vs. N.Y. Giants at
Canton, Ohio 8:00

Week 1

Thursday, August 8

N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh 8:00

Friday, August 9

Cincinnati at Buffalo 7:30
Detroit at Baltimore 8:00
Jacksonville at Atlanta 7:30
Oakland at Dallas 9:00

Saturday, August 10

Arizona at San Diego 10:00
Cleveland at Minnesota 8:00
Denver at Chicago 8:00
Green Bay at Philadelphia 7:30
Houston at New Orleans 8:00
Indianapolis at Seattle 10:00
K.C. at San Francisco 7:00
New England at N.Y. Giants 8:00
St. Louis at Tennessee 8:00
Washington at Carolina 8:00

Monday, August 12

Miami at Tampa Bay 8:00

Week 2

Thursday, August 15

Oakland at Tennessee 8:00
New Orleans at Miami 7:00
N.Y. Jets at Baltimore 8:00

Friday, August 16

Chicago at St. Louis 8:00
Minnesota at Buffalo 7:30
Seattle at San Diego 11:00

Saturday, August 17

Phil. at New England 8:00
Cincinnati at Indianapolis 7:00
Dallas at Carolina 8:00
Detroit at Cleveland 8:00
Green Bay at Arizona 9:00
Houston at Kansas City 8:30
N.Y. Giants at Atlanta 4:00
Tampa Bay at Jacksonville TBD

Sunday, August 18

Pittsburgh at Washington 8:00

Monday, August 19

San Francisco at Denver 8:00

Week 3

Thursday, August 22

San Diego at St. Louis 9:00

Friday, August 23

Baltimore at Philadelphia 8:00
Carolina at New England 8:00
Jacksonville at Chicago 8:00
Tennessee at Minnesota 8:00

Saturday, August 24

Atlanta at Dallas 8:00
Buffalo at Indianapolis 7:00
Denver at Arizona 9:00
Kansas City at Seattle 10:00
Miami at Houston 8:00
New Orleans at Cincinnati 7:30
N.Y. Giants at N.Y. Jets 8:00
Pittsburgh at Detroit 12:30
San Francisco at Oakland 9:00
Washington at Tampa Bay 8:00

Monday, August 26

Cleveland at Green Bay 8:00

Week 4

Wednesday, August 28

San Diego at San Francisco 9:00

Thursday, August 29

Arizona at Oakland 9:00
Atlanta at Cincinnati 7:30
Baltimore at N.Y. Giants 8:00
Buffalo at Detroit 8:00
Chicago at Miami 7:00
Dallas at Jacksonville 8:00
Minnesota at Pittsburgh 7:30
New England at Washington 8:00
Seattle at Denver 9:00

Friday, August 30

Carolina at Cleveland 8:00
Ind. at New Orleans 7:00
Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets 7:30
St. Louis at Kansas City 8:30
Tampa Bay at Houston 8:00
Tennessee at Green Bay 8:00

REGULAR SEASON

(All times Eastern)

Week 1

Thursday, September 5

San Francisco at N.Y. Giants 8:30

Sunday, September 8

N.Y. Jets at Buffalo 1:00
Baltimore at Carolina 1:00
Minnesota at Chicago 1:00
San Diego at Cincinnati 1:00
Kansas City at Cleveland 1:00
Atlanta at Green Bay 1:00
Indianapolis at Jacksonville 1:00
Detroit at Miami 1:00
Philadelphia at Tennessee 1:00
Arizona at Washington 1:00
St. Louis at Denver 4:15
Seattle at Oakland 4:15
New Orleans at Tampa Bay 4:15
Dallas at Houston 8:30

Monday, September 9

Pittsburgh at New England 9:00

Week 2

Sunday, September 15

Chicago at Atlanta 1:00
Tampa Bay at Baltimore 1:00
Detroit at Carolina 1:00
Cincinnati at Cleveland 1:00
Tennessee at Dallas 1:00
Miami at Indianapolis 1:00
Jacksonville at Kansas City 1:00
Green Bay at New Orleans 1:00
New England at N.Y. Jets 1:00
N.Y. Giants at St. Louis 4:05
Arizona at Seattle 4:05
Buffalo at Minnesota 4:15
Houston at San Diego 4:15
Denver at San Francisco 4:15
Oakland at Pittsburgh 8:30

Monday, September 16

Philadelphia at Washington 9:00

Week 3

Sunday, September 22

New Orleans at Chicago 1:00
Indianapolis at Houston 1:00
N.Y. Jets at Miami 1:00
Carolina at Minnesota 1:00

Kansas City at New England 1:00

Dallas at Philadelphia 1:00

Cleveland at Tennessee 1:00

San Diego at Arizona 4:05

Buffalo at Denver 4:05

Green Bay at Detroit 4:15

Seattle at N.Y. Giants 4:15

Wash. at San Francisco 4:15

Cincinnati at Atlanta 8:30

Monday, September 23

St. Louis at Tampa Bay 9:00

(Open date: Baltimore, Jacksonville, Oakland, Pittsburgh)

Week 4

Sunday, September 29

Chicago at Buffalo 1:00
New Orleans at Detroit 1:00
Carolina at Green Bay 1:00
N.Y. Jets at Jacksonville 1:00
Miami at Kansas City 1:00
Houston at Philadelphia 1:00
Cleveland at Pittsburgh 1:00
Dallas at St. Louis 1:00
N.Y. Giants at Arizona 4:05
Tampa Bay at Cincinnati 4:05
Tennessee at Oakland 4:15
New England at San Diego 4:15
Minnesota at Seattle 8:30

Monday, September 30

Denver at Baltimore 9:00
(Open date: Atlanta, Indianapolis, San Francisco, Washington)

Week 5

Sunday, October 6

Tampa Bay at Atlanta 1:00
Oakland at Buffalo 1:00
Arizona at Carolina 1:00
N.Y. Giants at Dallas 1:00
Cincinnati at Indianapolis 1:00
New England at Miami 1:00
Pittsburgh at New Orleans 1:00
Washington at Tennessee 1:00
San Diego at Denver 4:05
Kansas City at N.Y. Jets 4:05
Philadelphia at Jacksonville 4:15
St. Louis at San Francisco 4:15
Baltimore at Cleveland 8:30

Monday, October 7

Green Bay at Chicago 9:00
(Open date: Detroit, Houston, Minnesota, Seattle)

Week 6

Sunday, October 13

Pittsburgh at Cincinnati 1:00
Carolina at Dallas 1:00
Buffalo at Houston 1:00
Baltimore at Indianapolis 1:00
Detroit at Minnesota 1:00
Green Bay at New England 1:00
Atlanta at N.Y. Jets 1:00
Jacksonville at Tennessee 1:00
New Orleans at Washington 1:00
Oakland at St. Louis 4:15
Kansas City at San Diego 4:15
Cleveland at Tampa Bay 4:15
Miami at Denver 8:30

Monday, October 14

San Francisco at Seattle 9:00
(Open date: Arizona, Chicago, N.Y. Jets, Philadelphia)

Week 7

Sunday, October 20

Carolina at Atlanta 1:00
Jacksonville at Baltimore 1:00
Chicago at Detroit 1:00
Denver at Kansas City 1:00
Buffalo at Miami 1:00
San Francisco at New Orleans 1:00
Minnesota at N.Y. Jets 1:00
Tampa Bay at Philadelphia 1:00
Seattle at St. Louis 1:00
Houston at Cleveland 4:05
San Diego at Oakland 4:05
Dallas at Arizona 4:15
Washington at Green Bay 4:15

Monday, October 21

Indianapolis at Pittsburgh 9:00
(Open date: Cincinnati, New England, N.Y. Giants, Tennessee)

Week 8

Sunday, October 27

Pittsburgh at Baltimore 1:00
Detroit at Buffalo 1:00
Tampa Bay at Carolina 1:00
Tennessee at Cincinnati 1:00
Seattle at Dallas 1:00
Oakland at Kansas City 1:00
Chicago at Minnesota 1:00
Atlanta at New Orleans 1:00
Cleveland at N.Y. Jets 1:00
Arizona at San Francisco 4:05
Houston at Jacksonville 4:15
Denver at New England 4:15
Indianapolis at Washington 8:30

Monday, October 28

N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia 9:00
(Open date: Green Bay, Miami, St. Louis, San Diego)

Week 9

Sunday, November 3

Baltimore at Atlanta 1:00
New England at Buffalo 1:00
Philadelphia at Chicago 1:00
Pittsburgh at Cleveland 1:00
Dallas at Detroit 1:00
Cincinnati at Houston 1:00
Tennessee at Indianapolis 1:00
Minnesota at Tampa Bay 1:00
N.Y. Jets at San Diego 4:05
St. Louis at Arizona 4:15
San Francisco at Oakland 4:15
Washington at Seattle 4:15
Jacksonville at N.Y. Giants 8:30

Monday, November 4

Miami at Green Bay 9:00
(Open date: Carolina, Denver, Kansas City, New Orleans)

Week 10

Sunday, November 10

Cincinnati at Baltimore 1:00
New Orleans at Carolina 1:00
Detroit at Green Bay 1:00
N.Y. Giants at Minnesota 1:00
Indianapolis at Philadelphia 1:00
Atlanta at Pittsburgh 1:00
San Diego at St. Louis 1:00
Houston at Tennessee 1:00
Seattle at Arizona 4:05
Washington at Jacksonville 4:05
New England at Chicago 4:15
Kansas City at San Francisco 4:15
Miami at N.Y. Jets 8:30

Monday, November 11

Oakland at Denver 9:00
(Open date: Buffalo, Cleveland, Dallas, Tampa Bay)

Week 11

Sunday, November 17

New Orleans at Atlanta 1:00
Cleveland at Cincinnati 1:00
Dallas at Indianapolis 1:00
Buffalo at Kansas City 1:00
Baltimore at Miami 1:00
Green Bay at Minnesota 1:00
Washington at N.Y. Giants 1:00
Arizona at Philadelphia 1:00
Pittsburgh at Tennessee 1:00
San Francisco at San Diego 4:05
Carolina at Tampa Bay 4:05
N.Y. Jets at Detroit 4:15
Jacksonville at Houston 4:15
Denver at Seattle 4:15
New England at Oakland 8:30

Monday, November 18

Chicago at St. Louis 9:00

Week 12

Sunday, November 24

Tennessee at Baltimore 1:00
Atlanta at Carolina 1:00
Detroit at Chicago 1:00
Jacksonville at Dallas 1:00
San Diego at Miami 1:00
Minnesota at New England 1:00
Cleveland at New Orleans 1:00
Buffalo at N.Y. Jets 1:00
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh 1:00
Green Bay at Tampa Bay 1:00
Oakland at Arizona 4:05
Kansas City at Seattle 4:05
N.Y. Giants at Houston 4:15
St. Louis at Washington 4:15
Indianapolis at Denver 8:30

Monday, November 25

Philadelphia at San Francisco 9:00

Week 13

Thursday, November 28

New England at Detroit 12:30
Washington at Dallas 4:05

Sunday, December 1

Miami at Buffalo 1:00
Baltimore at Cincinnati 1:00
Carolina at Cleveland 1:00
Chicago at Green Bay 1:00
Pittsburgh at Jacksonville 1:00
Arizona at Kansas City 1:00
Atlanta at Minnesota 1:00
Tennessee at N.Y. Giants 1:00
Houston at Indianapolis 4:05
Denver at San Diego 4:05
St. Louis at Philadelphia 4:15
Seattle at San Francisco 4:15
Tampa Bay at New Orleans 8:30

Monday, December 2

N.Y. Jets at Oakland 9:00

Week 14

Sunday, December 8

Cincinnati at Carolina 1:00
San Francisco at Dallas 1:00
Cleveland at Jacksonville 1:00
St. Louis at Kansas City 1:00
Buffalo at New England 1:00
Houston at Pittsburgh 1:00
Atlanta at Tampa Bay 1:00

Indianapolis at Tennessee	1:00
N.Y. Giants at Washington	1:00
Detroit at Arizona	4:05
New Orleans at Baltimore	4:05
Philadelphia at Seattle	4:05
Denver at N.Y. Jets	4:15
Oakland at San Diego	4:15
Minnesota at Green Bay	8:30
Monday, December 9	
Chicago at Miami	9:00

Week 15

Sunday, December 15

Seattle at Atlanta	1:00
San Diego at Buffalo	1:00
N.Y. Jets at Chicago	1:00
Jacksonville at Cincinnati	1:00
Indianapolis at Cleveland	1:00
Tampa Bay at Detroit	1:00
Baltimore at Houston	1:00
Oakland at Miami	1:00
Minnesota at New Orleans	1:00
Washington at Philadelphia	1:00
Carolina at Pittsburgh	1:00
Kansas City at Denver	4:05
Dallas at N.Y. Giants	4:15
Green Bay at San Francisco	4:15
Arizona at St. Louis	8:30

Monday, December 16

New England at Tennessee	9:00
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Week 16

Saturday, December 21

Miami at Minnesota	1:30
San Francisco at Arizona	5:00
Philadelphia at Dallas	8:30

Sunday, December 22

Detroit at Atlanta	1:00
Chicago at Carolina	1:00
New Orleans at Cincinnati	1:00
Buffalo at Green Bay	1:00
N.Y. Giants at Indianapolis	1:00
Tennessee at Jacksonville	1:00
San Diego at Kansas City	1:00
Houston at Washington	1:00
St. Louis at Seattle	4:05
Cleveland at Baltimore	4:15
Denver at Oakland	4:15
N.Y. Jets at New England	8:30

Monday, December 23

Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay	9:00
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Week 17

Saturday, December 28

Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants	1:30
Kansas City at Oakland	5:00

Sunday, December 29

Cincinnati at Buffalo	1:00
Atlanta at Cleveland	1:00
Minnesota at Detroit	1:00
Tennessee at Houston	1:00
Miami at New England	1:00
Carolina at New Orleans	1:00
Baltimore at Pittsburgh	1:00
Dallas at Washington	1:00
Jacksonville at Indianapolis	4:05
Arizona at Denver	4:15
Green Bay at N.Y. Jets	4:15
Seattle at San Diego	4:15
Tampa Bay at Chicago	8:30

Monday, December 30

San Francisco at St. Louis	9:00
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2001 league leaders

Rushing yards		Kwamie Lassiter, Ari.		9
Priest Holmes, K.C.	1,555	Deltha O'Neal, Den.		9
Curtis Martin, NYJ	1,513	Doug Evans, Car.		8
Stephen Davis, Wash.	1,432	Ryan McNeil, S.D.		8
Ahman Green, G.B.	1,387	Zack Bronson, S.F.		7
Marshall Faulk, St.L.	1,382	Ahmed Plummer, S.F.		7
Shaun Alexander, Sea.	1,318	Avg. punt returns (20 returns)		
Corey Dillon, Cin.	1,315	Troy Brown, N.E.	14.2	
Ricky Williams, N.O.	1,245	Darrien Gordon, Atl.	14.1	
L. Tomlinson, S.D.	1,236	Reggie Swinton, Dal.	13.4	
Garrison Hearst, S.F.	1,206	Deltha O'Neal, Den.	13.1	
Rushing touchdowns		Eric Metcalf, Wash.	12.5	
Shaun Alexander, Sea.	14	Jermaine Lewis, Balt.	12.4	
Marshall Faulk, St.L.	12	Brian Mitchell, Phi.	12.0	
Antowain Smith, N.E.	12	Jeff Ogden, Mia.	11.8	
Mike Alstott, T.B.	10	Arnold Jackson, Ari.	11.5	
Corey Dillon, Cin.	10	Tim Dwight, S.D.	11.3	
Curtis Martin, NYJ	10	Avg. kickoff return yds. (20 returns)		
L. Tomlinson, S.D.	10	Ronney Jenkins, S.D.	26.6	
Ahman Green, G.B.	9	Steve Smith, Car.	25.6	
Stacey Mack, Jax.	9	Desmond Howard, Det.	25.4	
Dominic Rhodes, Ind.	9	Brian Mitchell, Phi.	25.0	
Passer rating		Jermaine Lewis, Balt.	24.7	
Kurt Warner, St.L.	101.4	Darrick Vaughn, Atl.	24.4	
Rich Gannon, Oak.	95.5	Deuce McAllister, N.O.	24.2	
Jeff Garcia, S.F.	94.8	Michael Lewis, N.O.	23.8	
Brett Favre, G.B.	94.1	Reggie Swinton, Dal.	23.7	
Steve McNair, Tenn.	90.2	Chris Cole, Den.	23.5	
Tom Brady, N.E.	86.5	Avg. punting yards (40 punts)		
Donovan McNabb, Phi.	84.3	Todd Sauerbrun, Car.	47.5	
Peyton Manning, Ind.	84.1	Shane Lechler, Oak.	46.2	
Chris Chandler, Atl.	84.1	Tom Rouen, Den.	45.3	
Mark Brunell, Jax.	84.1	Hunter Smith, Ind.	44.5	
Passing yards		Jeff Feagles, Sea.	43.9	
Kurt Warner, St.L.	4,830	Field-goal perc. (16 attempts)		
Peyton Manning, Ind.	4,131	Olindo Mare, Mia.	90.5	
Brett Favre, G.B.	3,921	Phil Dawson, Cle.	88.0	
Aaron Brooks, N.O.	3,832	John Carney, N.O.	87.1	
Rich Gannon, Oak.	3,828	Jason Elam, Den.	86.1	
Trent Green, K.C.	3,783	Matt Stover, Balt.	85.7	
Kerry Collins, NYG	3,764	Field goals		
Jake Plummer, Ari.	3,653	Jason Elam, Den.	31	
Jeff Garcia, S.F.	3,538	Kris Brown, Pitt.	30	
Doug Flutie, S.D.	3,464	Matt Stover, Balt.	30	
Passing touchdowns		Jay Feely, Atl.	29	
Kurt Warner, St.L.	36	Mike Vanderjagt, Ind.	28	
Brett Favre, G.B.	32	John Carney, N.O.	27	
Jeff Garcia, S.F.	32	Todd Peterson, K.C.	27	
Rich Gannon, Oak.	27	David Akers, Phi.	26	
Aaron Brooks, N.O.	26	Brett Conway, Wash.	26	
Peyton Manning, Ind.	26	Paul Edinger, Chi.	26	
Donovan McNabb, Phi.	25	Points scored by kickers		
Brian Griese, Den.	23	Jeff Wilkins, St.L.	127	
Steve McNair, Tenn.	21	Mike Vanderjagt, Ind.	125	
Jay Fiedler, Mia.	20	Kris Brown, Pitt.	124	
Pass receptions		Jason Elam, Den.	124	
Rod Smith, Den.	113	David Akers, Phi.	115	
Jimmy Smith, Jax.	112	Jay Feely, Atl.	115	
Marvin Harrison, Ind.	109	Matt Stover, Balt.	115	
Keyshawn Johnson, T.B.	106	John Carney, N.O.	113	
Troy Brown, N.E.	101	Adam Vinatieri, N.E.	113	
Marty Booker, Chi.	100	Paul Edinger, Chi.	112	
David Boston, Ari.	98	Points scored by non-kickers		
Hines Ward, Pitt.	94	Marshall Faulk, St.L.	128	
Keenan McCardell, Jax.	93	Shaun Alexander, Sea.	96	
Terrell Owens, S.F.	93	Terrell Owens, S.F.	96	
Receiving yards		Marvin Harrison, Ind.	90	
David Boston, Ari.	1,598	Corey Dillon, Cin.	78	
Marvin Harrison, Ind.	1,524	Antowain Smith, N.E.	78	
Terrell Owens, S.F.	1,412	Mike Alstott, T.B.	70	
Jimmy Smith, Jax.	1,373	Rod Smith, Den.	68	
Torry Holt, St.L.	1,363	Ahman Green, G.B.	66	
Rod Smith, Den.	1,343	Derrick Mason, Tenn.	62	
K. Johnson, T.B.	1,266	Sacks		
Joe Horn, N.O.	1,265	Michael Strahan, NYG	22.5	
Randy Moss, Min.	1,233	Peter Boulware, Balt.	15.0	
Troy Brown, N.E.	1,199	Leonard Little, St.L.	14.5	
Receiving touchdowns		Charlie Clemons, N.O.	13.5	
Terrell Owens, S.F.	16	K. Gbaja-Biamila, G.B.	13.5	
Marvin Harrison, Ind.	15	John Abraham, NYJ	13.0	
Rod Smith, Den.	11	Jamir Miller, Cle.	13.0	
Randy Moss, Min.	10	Marcellus Wiley, S.D.	13.0	
Eight players tied with	9	Jason Gildon, Pitt.	12.0	
Interceptions		Patrick Kerney, Atl.	12.0	
Ronde Barber, T.B.	10			
Anthony Henry, Cle.	10			

Final standings

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

EASTERN DIVISION

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	Opp.	Home	Away	vs. AFC	vs. NFC	vs. AFC East
New England*	11	5	0	.688	371	272	6-2	5-3	8-4	3-1	6-2
Miami†	11	5	0	.688	344	290	7-1	4-4	9-3	2-2	5-3
N.Y. Jets†	10	6	0	.625	308	295	3-5	7-1	8-4	2-2	5-3
Indianapolis	6	10	0	.375	413	486	3-5	3-5	5-7	1-3	3-5
Buffalo	3	13	0	.188	265	420	1-7	2-6	2-10	1-3	1-7

CENTRAL DIVISION

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	Opp.	Home	Away	vs. AFC	vs. NFC	vs. AFC Central
Pittsburgh*	13	3	0	.812	352	212	7-1	6-2	10-3	3-0	7-3
Baltimore†	10	6	0	.625	303	265	6-2	4-4	8-4	2-2	6-4
Cleveland	7	9	0	.438	285	319	4-4	3-5	6-7	1-2	5-5
Tennessee	7	9	0	.438	336	388	3-5	4-4	4-8	3-1	3-7
Jacksonville	6	10	0	.375	294	286	3-5	3-5	5-8	1-2	5-5
Cincinnati	6	10	0	.375	226	309	4-4	2-6	5-8	1-2	4-6

WESTERN DIVISION

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	Opp.	Home	Away	vs. AFC	vs. NFC	vs. AFC West
Oakland*	10	6	0	.625	399	327	5-3	5-3	7-5	3-1	6-2
Seattle	9	7	0	.562	301	324	6-2	3-5	8-4	1-3	5-3
Denver	8	8	0	.500	340	339	6-2	2-6	5-7	3-1	4-4
Kansas City	6	10	0	.375	320	344	3-5	3-5	5-7	1-3	4-4
San Diego	5	11	0	.312	332	321	4-4	1-7	3-9	2-2	1-7

*Division champion. †Wild-card team.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

EASTERN DIVISION

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	Opp.	Home	Away	vs. AFC	vs. NFC	vs. NFC East
Philadelphia*	11	5	0	.688	343	208	4-4	7-1	3-1	8-4	6-2
Washington	8	8	0	.500	256	303	4-4	4-4	2-2	6-6	4-4
N.Y. Giants	7	9	0	.438	294	321	5-3	2-6	2-2	5-7	4-4
Arizona	7	9	0	.438	295	343	3-5	4-4	3-1	4-8	2-6
Dallas	5	11	0	.312	246	338	4-4	1-7	0-4	5-7	4-4

CENTRAL DIVISION

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	Opp.	Home	Away	vs. AFC	vs. NFC	vs. NFC Central
Chicago*	13	3	0	.812	338	203	7-1	6-2	3-1	10-2	6-2
Green Bay†	12	4	0	.750	390	266	7-1	5-3	3-1	9-3	6-2
Tampa Bay†	9	7	0	.562	324	280	5-3	4-4	2-2	7-5	4-4
Minnesota	5	11	0	.312	290	390	5-3	0-8	1-3	4-8	3-5
Detroit	2	14	0	.125	270	424	2-6	0-8	0-4	2-10	1-7

WESTERN DIVISION

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	Opp.	Home	Away	vs. AFC	vs. NFC	vs. NFC West
St. Louis*	14	2	0	.875	503	273	6-2	8-0	4-0	10-2	7-1
San Francisco†	12	4	0	.750	409	282	7-1	5-3	4-0	8-4	6-2
New Orleans	7	9	0	.438	333	409	3-5	4-4	2-2	5-7	4-4
Atlanta	7	9	0	.438	291	377	3-5	4-4	1-3	6-6	3-5
Carolina	1	15	0	.062	253	410	0-8	1-7	0-4	1-11	0-8

*Division champion. †Wild-card team.

AFC PLAYOFFS

AFC wild card:

OAKLAND 38, N.Y. Jets 24
Baltimore 20, MIAMI 3

AFC semifinals:

NEW ENGLAND 16, Oakland 13 (OT)
PITTSBURGH 27, Baltimore 10

AFC championship:

New England 24, PITTSBURGH 17

NFC PLAYOFFS

NFC wild card:

PHILADELPHIA 31, Tampa Bay 9
GREEN BAY 25, San Francisco 15

NFC semifinals:

Philadelphia 33, CHICAGO 19
ST. LOUIS 45, Green Bay 17

NFC championship:

ST. LOUIS 29, Philadelphia 24

SUPER BOWL 36

New England 20, St. Louis 17

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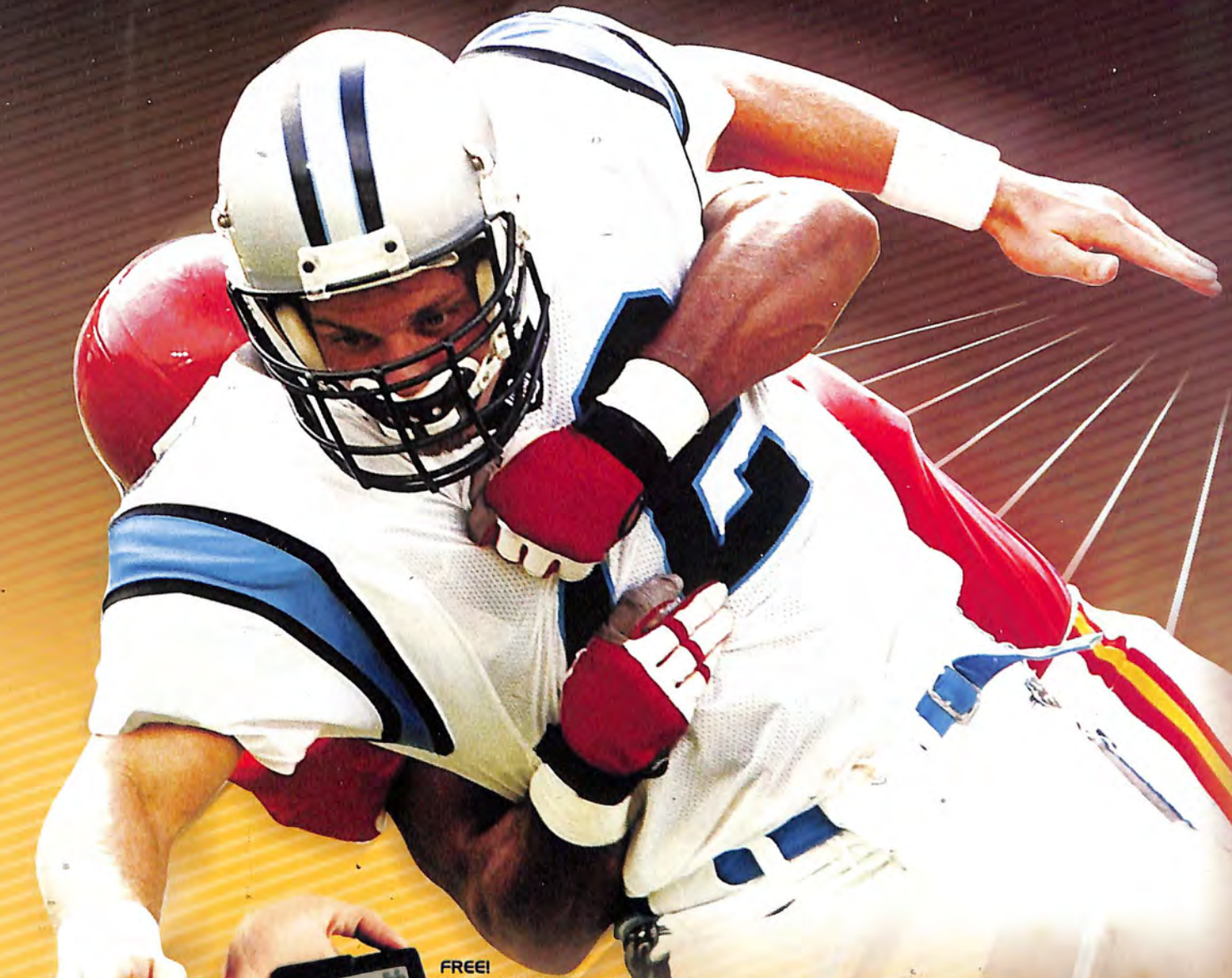
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